

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF GLOSSOLALIA IN ACTS WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION  
TO THE EPHESIAN DISCIPLES PERICOPE (ACTS 18:24–19:7)

by

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the social function of glossolalia in the narrative world of the book of Acts. In so doing, it addresses the lack of scholarship related to treating glossolalic references from social scientific perspectives. Particularly noted is the absence in the literature of adequate treatments of the Ephesian disciples pericope in Acts 18:24–19:7, which this study seeks to correct. Through application of Berger and Luckmann's sociology of knowledge models, this study argues that reading Luke-Acts as the author's legitimation of the Jesus movement's social world is a valid, even preferred reading of the literature. Tracing the development of Luke's legitimation conceptual machinery reveals the social conflict background that to a large degree motivated its writing and organized its content. The purity-related conflicts between circumcision loyalists and Jesus followers from the Gentile world that dominate the second half of Acts is of particular interest to this research. This study demonstrates how Luke uses glossolalia as a divinely initiated marker of Gentile purity status to legitimate new social boundaries that supersede circumcision. These new social boundaries, marked by glossolalia, represent an integral component of the Jesus movement's revised purity map, relative to temple-centred Yahwism. The legitimation reading, including Luke's construction and validation of the Jesus group's symbolic universe and its conclusions regarding the social function of glossolalia, is applied to the Ephesian disciples pericope. This study argues that the events narrated in this passage represent a continuing social conflict between circumcision loyalists and Gentile converts. Luke narrates the events in Acts 18:24–19:7 in order to correct a deviant baptism teaching (John's baptism) that was propagated with the intent, based on purity concerns and prejudice, to marginalize Gentiles from full social integration into the Jesus community. Demonstrating that glossolalia functions as a social boundary marker that supersedes circumcision and that this best informs our interpretation of the Ephesian disciples pericope fully integrates this narrative event into Luke's literary programme.

Key terms:

Glossolalia; symbolic universe; legitimation; purity conflict; purity boundary; purity map; social boundary; circumcision; tongues; Apollos; Ephesian disciples; John's baptism

CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM, THE METHOD, A LITERATURE REVIEW, AND A  
FOUNDATION FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

**1 Introduction**

Arguably, the single greatest challenge to apprehending the full meaning of ancient literature is mastering the original author's language. New Testament study has historically recognized such linguistic mastery as key to understanding the sacred texts of Christianity. Hermeneutic principles demand respect for the intricate process of extracting meaning from any literary text, especially that deposited in ancient language banks such as Koiné Greek. It has also long been recognized that language is a cultural phenomenon, richly and uniquely embedded in and representing its host culture. However, only in recent decades (from the second half of the last century) has this longstanding recognition led to significant advances in interdisciplinary critical analysis that most fully explores the interdependency of culture and language. The explosion of scholarship in this area has made available and viable the social science tools necessary to more fully explore dimensions of understanding previously obscured. The identification of social dynamics, social and cultural values, and anthropological features of the ancient world that produced the New Testament texts provide broader avenues of critical analysis. This is arguably the second greatest challenge to understanding the ancient texts—identifying more nearly with the social and cultural matrix in which the literature was born.

It is the identification of this socio-cultural matrix that is noticeably absent from scholarly literature related to glossolalia accounts in Acts. The Acts narrative states that on at least three occasions followers of Jesus experienced an encounter with the Holy Spirit that induced an



outward behavioural manifestation the author labels λαλεῖν γλώσσαις. This may be one of the most peculiar events recorded in this literature. Despite the uniqueness of this recorded event in Luke's literature, there is a noticeable lack of social scientific critical scholarship to aid in its understanding. To be sure, there is ample scholarly (and nonscholarly) literature addressing glossolalia as theology and dogma, religious experience, and as psychological phenomena. However, this body of research fails to provide an adequate understanding of the social and cultural context related to glossolalia or its social function in Luke's narrative literature. In other words, existing scholarly treatments of glossolalia as religious experience, psychological phenomena, or theological and dogmatic issues, do not help us understand how glossolalic events were understood in the early Jesus movement and the role they play in Lucan literature. This study is motivated in part by this lack of scholarship related to the glossolalia<sup>1</sup> accounts in Acts. More specifically, this project seeks to contribute scholarly analyses of the social role of glossolalia in the first-century Jesus group and its function within the narrative of Acts.

The first two accounts of glossolalia in Acts are set in relatively well-described contexts that fit ostensibly within the perceived literary flow. The first account (Acts 2:1–4) is set during the Feast of Pentecost and is staged as the fulfilment of Jesus' instructions and promise to his followers recorded in Acts 1:4–8. The second (Acts 10:46) occurs within the Cornelius household and is introduced with an extensive preparatory narrative that includes divine oracles and extended background information. A follow-up summary of its effect on the larger Jesus group is provided in Acts 11:1–18, further clarifying the significance of Luke's inclusion of this event. It is rather obvious how this glossolalia event furthers Luke's literary flow and the plot of the Jesus group's expansion to include Gentiles.

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<sup>1</sup> The term *glossolalia* is used throughout this work to refer to the phenomena recorded in Acts as γλώσσαις λαλεῖν. See Johnson 1998, 107, especially note 9. See also Behm (TDNT) 1985 and Harrisville 1976, 35–48.

Luke inserts the third glossolalia event (Acts 19:6) at the beginning of the narrative that describes the establishment and development of Paul's Ephesus mission. This passage begins with a description of Apollos and his activity in Ephesus, includes Paul's encounter with the twelve Ephesian disciples, and ends with the twelve speaking γλῶσσαις. This account of glossolalia is accompanied by virtually no introduction or background data. Its narrative purpose at this juncture is somewhat baffling, and we are provided no data concerning the effects of this event within the larger Jesus group. Of the three glossolalia events recorded in Acts, this stands as the most unexplained by Luke and subsequently the most inadequately addressed in scholarly literature.

This study's focus is to understand glossolalia generally within the Acts narrative and specifically within the pericope defined by Acts 18:24–19:7.<sup>2</sup> In order to better frame the focus of this research, some primary starting questions posed of this pericope might be as follows:

- How might reading this pericope in its probable social context (as nearly as it can be reconstructed) contribute to better understanding its meaning and significance within Luke's overarching purpose?
- What is the narrative and social significance of glossolalia in the account of these events?
- Was Luke indirectly addressing the prevalent social (Israelite-Gentile) purity conflict in the Acts narrative world within the account of these Ephesus events?

In further refining the need for research and the focus and purpose of this project, a set of more detailed (sociological and hermeneutical) questions may be posed, breaking down the previous questions into text-specific queries:

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<sup>2</sup> That these two events (the Apollos account and the Ephesian disciples encounter) should be understood together as forming one unified pericope will be argued later in this paper (contra Conzelmann, who argues that these are unrelated, even contrived, events).

- Why was Luke careful to identify Apollos as a Judean (Ἰουδαῖος, usually translated “Jew”; a distinct and primary socio-religious group in the literature)<sup>3</sup> and what might this identification contribute to understanding the social purpose of this event?
- Why did Paul’s initial question to the twelve Ephesian disciples concern receiving the Holy Spirit? Does this illuminate Paul’s existing concern about an underlying conflict issue, one that might possibly be identified by a fresh reading of the literature?
- Why did Paul’s immediate follow-up question concern the initiation rite of baptism, a dominant social boundary marker? Is it telling that Paul is immediately concerned with the mode of baptism when hearing that the converts were without the Holy Spirit?
- Was John’s baptism elemental to the underlying social conflict Luke may have been addressing? For example, was it an alternative initiation related to the purity conflict prevalent in Acts?
- Why is glossolalia specifically mentioned here and in the Cornelius account as indicative of Holy Spirit activity but not in Philip’s Samaritan mission account or Saul’s Holy Spirit infilling? Does this curious distinction in the narrative provide clues to our understanding of this particular pericope and glossolalia generally, given the social features related to each narrative group?

This project proposes that Luke intended more than simply to provide an historical record of events related to the establishment of an Ephesian Jesus group. It will explore social issues that would have prompted Luke to include this narrative record, to insert it here in his literature, and to structure it as he did. Identifying these background issues is a major purpose of this research. We are searching for a more complete understanding of the social significance

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<sup>3</sup> The translation and interpretive issues related to the Greek Ἰουδαῖος and relevant to this study are discussed below in section 3.3.

of glossolalia and what this understanding might suggest toward a more accurate and insightful interpretation of Acts 18:24–19:7.

As the above questions suggest, this research will propose that Luke's purpose for inserting this pericope was to address underlying conflicts that threatened both the cohesion and the legitimacy of the Jesus group, perhaps especially surrounding the Ephesus mission. It will be argued that this purpose was closely integrated with an overarching purpose in Acts, namely legitimating the Jesus group over and against competing forces both without and within. It will be further argued that conflicts related to purity concerns were a primary catalyst behind the legitimation purpose of the Luke-Acts literature, and that this purity conflict is a controlling and organizing theme in Acts. This argument proposes that the Israelite self-consciousness as a pure people, uniquely called and qualified to be the appointed custodians of God's holy presence on earth, created an ongoing conflict both from without and within the Jesus movement and that this purity conflict forms an organizing theme for Acts. This purity conflict theme is the basis of and framework for Luke's legitimation purpose for writing Luke-Acts. Purity issues and related practicalities of boundaries represent the essential fabric of the objective and subjective realities of both the broader Israelite religion and the early Jesus group emerging within the world of Yahweh worship.

## **2 The Research Problem**

Stated more concisely, the purpose of this study is to demonstrate Luke's legitimating strategy in response to a purity conflict theme as Luke's primary purpose for writing the book of Acts. This legitimation strategy provides the background by which we can understand the narrative social significance of the Acts glossolalia accounts and thus analyse Acts 18:24–19:7 in light of this background.

It will be argued that this pericope must be appreciated and interpreted within the entire scope of Luke's legitimation purpose and, as nearly as possible, with a sociologically informed understanding of the background issues. Stated another way, if this study can demonstrate that Luke builds a legitimation of the Jesus group on the conflicts between the various Palestine and *Diaspora* Judaisms and Jesus group purity boundaries, and that glossolalia was a primary purity boundary marker for the in-group (Esler 1994, 38), the Ephesian disciple encounter should be examined under this new light. This new light will point toward an interpretation of our pericope that integrates it with Luke's overarching legitimation purpose. It should also reveal background purity conflict issues, which were represented by the characters and events in our pericope, namely Apollos and the twelve disciples. We suggest here, although it remains to be demonstrated, that Apollos was participating in heretical teaching—deviant from the Jesus society's norm, albeit perhaps innocently—that was intended to marginalize Gentile converts by preventing their receiving the Holy Spirit. This deviant doctrine may have grown out of the defeat of the circumcision group at the Jerusalem council. If this can be demonstrated, it could be inferred that Luke was respectfully rehabilitating Apollos' influence, exposing and correcting the heresy, and illustrating the superiority of the glossolalic purity boundary (legitimation of a key institution of the Jesus group's symbolic universe). These statements represent the goal of this study and the hypotheses upon which it proceeds.

### **3 Methodology**

This study seeks to understand the role of glossolalia in the Acts literature and, by implication, in the early Jesus movement in Luke's narrative world. This project will analyse Acts from primarily a literary perspective, using sociological data and models to identify and examine themes, concepts, and structures. This approach intends to read the text historically, as defined by Craffert (1996, 46):

Reading a text in its period, which is referred to here as a historical aim of interpretation, focuses on a text as constructed by an author. . . . Construing a document in its pastness means that not only the meaning of words and sentences but also the ideology, values, customs, and social structures presupposed in a document, as well as the possible interaction between audience and document—in short, the meaning potential of a document—are limited by the socio-cultural matrix in which it is produced.

This departs from the historiographical approach (Luke as historian) that dominated Luke-Acts interpretation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. No attempt will be made to interpret or evaluate content by reconstructing or analysing historical settings or document development processes, vis-à-vis the literature produced under the methodologies of the Tübingen School or *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (or in reaction to these methodologies). As literature, this study will process the text as it exists, without considering issues related to authorship, dating, transmission, or source. However, this work clearly stands on the shoulders of all the New Testament scholars who grappled with the question posed by W. Ward Gasque (1989, 21): “What is the purpose of Acts? Can one, by examination of the contents of the book, discern the underlying aim of the author which has guided him in his selection and organization of his materials?” My departure from traditional Luke-Acts scholarship is primarily in methodology, and less in purpose. This study suggests an answer to Gasque’s question and explores an application of that answer.

In addition, attention will not be given directly to theological analyses (Luke as theologian).<sup>4</sup> Luke’s literature evidences features and content that cannot be exclusively explained or appreciated as only history or theology.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Thus departing also from the critical foundation laid by Haenchen and Conzelmann under the influence of Dibelius and Bultmann (who severed New Testament studies from the constraints of historiography) (Gasque, 1989). The migration of nineteenth-century scholarly concern from Luke-as-historian to twentieth-century Luke-as-theologian has resulted in recent decades in the explosion of literature harvesting topical theologies from Luke-Acts; ecclesiology (e.g., Stott 1990, Miller 2005, Beale 2004), pneumatology (e.g., Stronstad 1984, Menzies 1991, Mittelstadt 2004), christology (e.g., Crump 1999, Strauss 1995), and missiology (e.g., Kim 1999, Penney 1997, Dollar 1996).

<sup>5</sup> See Craffert (1993, 235–237) for a brief but persuasive treatment of the inadequacy of using a history-of-ideas (theology) or historical components approach to understanding first-century Judaism, including the

Using a literary perspective is not equivalent to applying a literary-critical method to the text. Literary criticism treats a text as an aesthetic object discreet from any social or historical facticity.<sup>6</sup> Literary criticism is concerned with those features by which a text is recognized as literature and can thus be compared and contrasted with other literary objects. For example, Tyson spends some effort reviewing the qualifications of Luke's Gospel as authentic literature in order to validate his application of literary critical tools to the text. The sticking point in qualifying the Gospels as literature, as Tyson argues, is locating them within a Hellenistic literary genre (Tyson 1983, 303–313). This study is not concerned with exploring such literary features as genre, character development, plot, language style and patterns, or narrative techniques (Craffert 1996, 50). We are concerned with reading the text as a literary artefact that represents an intentional social tool created to demonstrate the legitimacy of a movement's symbolic universe. However, this study approaches the text as literature in that we are concerned in seeing the text as a whole (Tyson 1983, 304). We will be concerned with organization and structure, but only in how these features achieve the author's purpose of legitimating the Jesus movement by the construction, explanation, and defence of its symbolic universe. In addition, by adopting a literary perspective to Acts (and the associated Gospel as necessary for a broader and more complete understanding), this study accepts the text as it has been transmitted to us. Thus, we will avoid issues related to historicity, authorship, dating,

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messianic Judaisms spawned by Paul's missionary activity.

<sup>6</sup> In introducing a literary-critical treatment of Psalm 90, David Robertson (1977, 36) states that once a text is "published it begins to lose its connection with its author(s) and his (their) situation and takes on an independent life of its own. The passage of time and the association of the psalm with other literary documents (like the rest of the OT or the Bible as a whole) further estrange it from its *Sitz-im-Leben*. Finally, it takes its place beside all other literary artifacts in the grand body of literature, and it becomes appropriate to consider it as one might consider any other work of literature. One can now apply to it categories that are used in the general study of literature, whether or not these categories were present in the culture in which it was written."

theology, and precanonical sources and forms.<sup>7</sup> This study begins by reading Luke-Acts as a legitimization of the Jesus movement. Therefore, we will explore how legitimization techniques are evident in the literature and how Luke develops them for his readers.<sup>8</sup> We will also survey the literature for organizational schemes and other elements that promote the legitimization purpose. Because legitimization requires the demonstration of validity and/or superiority of the group whose legitimacy is questioned, we are looking for the information and organizational patterns that contribute to this purpose. These findings will form the interpretive grid for the analysis of our Ephesian disciple pericope and its inclusion of glossolalia, seeking to understand how this pericope contributes to the legitimization purpose. The goal is to read the glossolalia and Ephesian disciples passages as part of the whole of Luke's narrative purpose. Apprehending Luke's purpose from the narrative evidence informs the meaning and significance of its parts.

This study applies parts of Berger and Luckmann's (1966) model of the maintenance of social worlds (a legitimization model), and as it is further developed by Berger (1967) in his subsequent application to religious societies. Salevao (2002, 53 note 132) states that since Gager's (1975) *Kingdom and Community* "the sociology of knowledge has provided the paradigm for the study of early Christianity as a social world in the making, and *The Social Construction of Reality* has become the main text for New Testament sociologists." McGrath (2001, 36) uses this same model in his work in John's Gospel. His summation of Berger and Luckmann's legitimization model states: "The legitimization model essentially proposes that

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<sup>7</sup> It should be noted, however, that the findings of this study may be useful to various dating, authorship, and community-critical considerations. For example, if Luke is writing to legitimize the symbolic universe of the Jesus movement over against that of Judaism (as this study will argue), it is curious that he does not reference the destruction of the temple since it represented the very centre of the Israelite purity map.

<sup>8</sup> See the following literature review for studies related to legitimization as a literary purpose in ancient writing, especially Salevao 2002, Esler 1987, and McGrath 2001. Although legitimization is assumed by this study to be Luke's purpose for writing, evidence for this assumption will be presented and analysed throughout.



conflict over ideas provokes the need for legitimation, and the process of legitimation causes those ideas to develop and be worked out in greater detail and intricacy.”

Social worlds are created by groups of actors with a common perception of reality based on mutual experiences and agreed interpretations of those experiences. These perceptions of reality are cultivated, organized, and solemnized into beliefs and normative behaviours through the dynamics of socialization. Of particular significance to any consideration of a Judaic social world is the centrality of knowledge categories defining clean/unclean, pure/impure, holy/profane and related boundaries. The need to transmit the social world to subsequent generations and/or to defend the social world against threatening ideas or behaviours, forces the construction of the social world’s symbolic universe. The term *symbolic universe* represents a social world’s (or community’s for our purposes) objective and subjective reality as they perceive it and serves to explain and give meaning to the group’s entire sphere of existence (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 96). A valid and healthy social world requires integration, cohesion, and transmission of its objective reality (symbolic universe) to another generation, either of biological offspring or converts to the social world’s perception. Generations subsequent to the founding members must receive knowledge of the social world’s reality by transmission since there are no biographical memories to rely on. In other words, founding members have the advantage of rehearsing personal memories to reconstruct the meaning and validity of beliefs and traditions. New generations have no personal memories and must rely on hearsay accounts of the group’s history, making legitimating formulas necessary. A social world’s members responsible for the successful transmission of “reality” to subsequent generations are compelled to construct these legitimating formulas (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 61–62; Berger 1967, 31–32, 35–47).

Legitimizing formulas, constructed to answer the “why” questions of subsequent generations and to protect the social world from sabotage by actors with conflicting interests,

cast the social world's reality (symbolic universe) in the best possible light, including muting or even concealing its "constructed" character. This is accomplished by using legitimating demonstrations that locate social institutions "within a sacred and cosmic frame of reference" (Berger 1967, 33).

Berger and Luckmann (1966) identify levels of legitimation. Legitimation of individual institutions within a society (92–95) is described as a different type and level than legitimation of a symbolic universe (104–112). The difference is described primarily as one of conceptual abstraction and sophistication. Berger and Luckmann (1966, 95–96) further identify legitimation of the symbolic universe as the highest level legitimation, encompassing the totality of socially objectivated and subjectively real meaning.<sup>9</sup> To successfully demonstrate via a legitimating formula that a society is divinely conceived, constituted, and perpetuated, having peculiar purity characteristics that are divinely appointed is to associate that society and its "universe of reality" with ultimate legitimacy. New generations of members acquire knowledge of the community's reality via these legitimating formulas and are initiated into the maintenance and defence responsibilities for the social world.

Note how Luke clearly signals this purpose in his Gospel's preface. A new social world emerges around the person and life of Jesus. Its beliefs and behaviours (its very perception of reality) are forming in conflict with the macro society within which it resides and identifies itself. Theophilus represents the "subsequent generation," who must be convinced of the legitimacy of the Jesus group's version of reality. The fit of the legitimation model to the Lucan literature is confirmed by the presence of key factors, such as the preface addressing a convert's need for confirming documentation, the obvious struggle of a new social world to

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<sup>9</sup> "All the sectors of the institutional order are integrated in an all-embracing frame of reference, which now constitutes a universe in the literal sense of the word, because *all* human experience can now be conceived of as taking place *within* it" (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 96).

establish its validity in the face of conflict with its spawning society, and the chaos and sabotage threatened from within by circumcision loyalists. If social chaos (purity confusion, disloyalty, fragmentation, and dissolution) is to be avoided and the Jesus group's integrity maintained by in-group members, Luke's legitimation strategy must succeed.

In the end, when considering whether this model is adequate to our challenge of understanding the social function of glossolalia, Reimer's (2002, 16) perspective is useful as both an objective and as a measuring stick. He states that success in analyzing the socio-cultural world of Acts is gauged "by asking Geertz's [1973, 24] question of whether it has aided us 'in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can, in some extended sense of the term, converse with them.'"

### 3.2 Legitimation

Berger's (1967, 29–30) sociological description of *legitimation* will be instructive here and useful throughout this study:

By legitimation is meant socially objectivated 'knowledge' that serves to explain and justify the social order. Put differently, legitimations are answers to any questions about the 'why' of institutional arrangements. . . . Legitimations belong to the domain of social objectivations, that is, to what passes for 'knowledge' in a given collectivity. This implies that they have a status of objectivity quite different from merely individual cogitations about the 'why' and 'wherefore' of social events. . . . They do not only tell people what *ought to be*. Often they merely propose what *is*. . . . Legitimation begins with statements as to 'what's what.' Only on this cognitive basis is it possible for the normative propositions to be meaningful.

Esler (1994, 6–12) outlines well the appropriateness of using Berger and Luckmann's sociology of knowledge model for understanding the legitimation of Christian communities as provided in New Testament documents. He goes so far as to argue that, "within the framework of sociological theory," all New Testament literature was written for specific communities (*social worlds* in Berger's vernacular) and contain theologies that represent "symbolic provinces of meaning . . . to legitimate the early gatherings of Christians . . . . New Testament theologies

become sacred canopies for those fragile social worlds seeking to find a place for themselves . . . in the teeth of opposition from without and dissension . . . within” (Esler 1994, 11).

Watson (1986) and Brawley (1987) provide very practical distillations of essential legitimating techniques in the form of lists. These lists will form the utilitarian version of the model we will apply to the text in the next chapter. Berger and Luckmann will be referenced as needed, but the acute abstractions of their sociological theory are difficult to apply to written text for interpretation. As we apply to the text the models comprised of Watson and Brawley’s listed techniques, we will analyse the application as needed through the theories of Berger and Luckmann. These lists, included here as methodologically relevant, will be discussed more fully as they are applied.

Watson (1986, 40) suggests that a sect can legitimate itself in three ways over against the parent group:

- 1) denunciation of opponents,
- 2) antithesis, and
- 3) reinterpretation of the religious traditions of the parent community so that they apply exclusively to the sect.

Brawley (1987, 55) identifies “at least six major categories of legitimating techniques” used by Luke, pointing out that all have extensive parallels in Hellenistic literature:

- 1) divine approval
- 2) access to divine power
- 3) high motivation
- 4) benefiting others
- 5) possessing a high level of culture
- 6) adhering to an ancient tradition

Identifying the Jesus group's controlling mindsets and motivations will be essential to detecting and tracing Luke's legitimization program. We will draw from anthropologists and sociologists such as Douglas, Berger, and Luckmann to aid in constructing our understanding of first-century legitimization literature and its motivating worldviews. In order to anticipate the conceptualization reflected in the Lucan literature, we must determine the Jesus group's status relative to its original group and its host cultures, and how that status may have created conflicts that produced the need for legitimization.<sup>10</sup>

### ***3.2.1 Legitimation or Apology?***

In order to distinguish this study's position toward and its use of legitimization terminology, a brief discussion of apology and legitimization is helpful. Luke-Acts has been labelled an *apologia* since at least the time of Heuman's short article in 1720 (Esler 1987, 204). Many discussions about the apologetic nature of Luke-Acts have been published with a variety of proposals as to the apologetic purpose.<sup>11</sup> Esler (1987) argues against labelling Luke-Acts an apology, proposing rather that the Lucan narrative is clearly legitimization. Responding to Esler, Alexander (2005, 187) simply absorbs legitimization as another category of apologetic. In light of this confusion and conflict, it seems necessary to better define this study's use of legitimization, and Esler and Alexander provide such an opportunity.<sup>12</sup> Alexander is classifying Acts in terms of its literary features and qualities. Esler is concerned with the social function of narrative.<sup>13</sup> It seems likely

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<sup>10</sup> As previously noted; see McGrath 2001, 36.

<sup>11</sup> One theme commonly proposed for the apologetic purpose of Luke-Acts is the defence of the Jesus movement to Roman officials and citizens.

<sup>12</sup> McGrath (2001, 38 note 104) makes a good argument for not splitting this hair and why it does not matter whether the author's intent is labelled "apology" or "legitimation" when analysing a text. The discussion here adopts the same attitude to this conflict regarding terminology.

<sup>13</sup> For the adaptation of literary genres for legitimization purposes, see Aune (1988, 122), who states, "The *function* of the Gospels was the legitimization of the present beliefs and practices of Christians by appealing to the paradigmatic role of the founder, just as the cultural values of the Hellenistic world were exemplified by the

that the confusion and conflict is more the result of allowing terminology to overlap between critical methodological concerns. In other words, Alexander is looking for literary category, while Esler is analysing social function. Alexander's apologetic literary category could well function sociologically as legitimation.<sup>14</sup>

This study will use legitimation language, not as literary classification, but as sociological analysis. Based on the work of Berger and Luckmann (and its application to biblical studies by Esler, Salevao, Theissen, and McGrath), we are reading Acts for clues to a sociological phenomenon that operates trans-culturally and, perhaps to some degree, beneath the conscious intentionality of the author. Expressed another way, this study is looking for evidence of a reform or sectarian group's explanation and justification of its social order, regardless of the literary form in which that response may be deposited. We characterize that explanation and justification as *legitimation*.

### 3.3 Israelite Religion and Related Historical Terminology Issues

Before we can proceed in applying research models to texts that require analyses of first-century religious phenomena and religio-social transactions, we must review the complex issues related to the relevant Israelite religious groups of Luke's historical and narrative context. The social and religious groups represented in the Luke-Acts narrative are not simply generalized nor easily categorized. Most Bible translations and the majority of scholarship have largely ignored or treated carelessly, until recent decades, the complexities and varieties of Second Temple

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subjects of Greco-Roman biographies. The Gospels, then, represent an adaptation of Greco-Roman biographical conventions used to convey a life of unique religious significance for Christians."

<sup>14</sup> Esler (1987) basically differentiates apology from legitimation as a function of intent: apology intends to convince an audience external to the group while legitimation intends to convince the in group members (16–18, 205, 217–219).

Israelite religion<sup>15</sup> as embraced and practised by various groups of Yahweh worshippers during the centuries surrounding the turn of the era (see Overman and Green 1992, 1038). Because this study intends to analyse Luke's legitimation of the Jesus movement as it was advanced over and against its originating and host body, it is critical that we consider exactly what that body was and how it should be treated as religion, including identifying terminology. Furthermore, defining what form(s) of or group(s) within the Israelite population Luke had in mind as a foil within his legitimation formula requires that we address issues of terminology. What should the Israelite religion of the first-century Mediterranean world be called and how should its member practitioners be referenced?<sup>16</sup>

An increasing volume of scholarship demonstrates that a monolithic and normative Judaism simply did not exist during the first century CE (Overman and Green 1992, 1038; Craffert 1993, 245–247; Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998, 44–46; Pilch 1999, 103; Purvis 1986, 3, 91, 95). Instead of speaking of “Judaism” as defining an Israelite religion, we should speak of “Judaisms,” to represent the numerous groups and movements that comprised Yahweh worship. The assumption that a definition of a monolithic Judaism adequately encompasses all expressions of the Israelite political/religious life is fallacious, given the evidence and its analysis (Craffert 1993, 246–247). Neither can a normative Judaism be identified by which

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<sup>15</sup> The concept, and its associated language, of religion being a discreet dimension of social life is only a few hundred years old. Thus, it is somewhat anachronistic to characterize any ideologies and practices of the first century related to interaction of humans with non-material realities as *religion*. What we understand as religion was not distinct in the first century from other spheres of social and political life. However, to avoid the potentially awkward language associated with trying to accurately characterize the embedded nature of religion throughout all spheres of first century culture, we will use the term *religion* throughout this study, stipulating that it is intended to encompass the embedded nature of the political-social-economic-religious institutions of the first century Eastern Mediterranean world.

<sup>16</sup> Esler (2007, 106–117) makes a cogent argument for understanding Ἰουδαῖος as a term of ethnicity, only one feature of which is religion. This argument is relevant to Esler's Johannine analysis, but less applicable here. Since Luke's intent is to legitimize the Jesus movement as an authentic Yahweh community, it is the religious dimensions of Ἰουδαῖος that we focus on. This is not to ignore the ethnic breadth of the term, but rather to simplify the discussion by focusing on the relevant religious dimension of the Israelite world—namely religion.

we can predict and evaluate narrative accounts of various transactions between Israelites and Gentiles.

This challenge is further complicated by the pervasive yet anachronistic (thus inaccurate) New Testament translation of Ἰουδαῖος and Ἰουδαῖοι as “Jew” and “Jews” (Elliot 2007, 119–121; Danker 2000, 478; Malina and Pilch 2008, 2–3).<sup>17</sup> Elliott cogently demonstrates the anachronistic and misleading nature of this translation, calling for final rejection by scholars of using “Jew” to represent Ἰουδαῖος in New Testament research. The preferred, and accurate, translation of Ἰουδαῖος is “Judean” (Elliot 2007, 131, 149; see also Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998, 44; Malina and Rohrbaugh 1992, 168; Pilch 1999, 99; Danker 2000, 478). This is true for all seventy-nine occurrences in Acts and the five occurrences in Luke’s Gospel.

Summarizing Elliott’s (2007, 121–125) concise review of the factors influencing the meaning and the most likely use of Ἰουδαῖος in the first-century CE Mediterranean world will provide a framework for defining this study’s use of terms relative to Israelites and their worship of Yahweh. The summary is most helpful to this study when distilled into two categorical questions: what did Ἰουδαῖος mean to which social groups and what self-reference terms did Yahweh worshippers prefer?

- Ἰουδαῖος was used by non-Israelites when referring to inhabitants of roughly the region designated Judea and as a generic identification of Yahweh worshippers, regardless of geographical residency.
- Ἰουδαῖος was used by Palestinian Israelites for self-reference when addressing Gentiles (out-group members). Israelites (Ἰσραηλῖται), people (or men) of Israel (λαοὺ Ἰσραήλ or ἄνδρες Ἰσραήλ), and house of Israel (οἶκος Ἰσραήλ), were

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<sup>17</sup> Danker (2000, 478) poignantly states “Incalculable harm has been caused by simply glossing [Ἰουδαῖος] with ‘Jew’, for many readers or auditors of Bible translations do not practice the historical judgment necessary to distinguish between circumstances and events of an ancient time and contemporary ethnic-religious-social realities, . . .”



preferred self-reference terms used by Palestinian Israelites when addressing other Israelite in-group members.

- *Diaspora* Israelites used Ἰουδαῖος for self-reference to both Israelite in-group members and Gentiles.

This study will avoid the use of *Jew* and *Jewish*, preferring instead the terms *Judean* and *Israelite*, observing where possible the above summarized categories. When religious and social features and issues related to the historical traditions of Israel as a people are intended, *Israel* and *Israelite* will be preferred, especially to indicate the irrelevance of geography and social categorization. Where Israelite inhabitants of Judea are intended, *Judean* will be used. Furthermore, this study will attempt to employ qualifying adjectives and other descriptors as needed when specific Israelite communities or Israelite religious variants are the focus of discussion. For example, various groups participating in the temple cult will be identified specifically, as needed, and the temple system itself will be distinguished from the broader, and sometimes disparate, Israelite groups. It is not intended that this study provide an authoritative analysis of Second Temple religious terminology. It is intended that this study acknowledge the relevant scholarship and employ accurate and historically relevant vocabulary when referring to religious traditions and social groups of the New Testament cultural world.

Toward this end, identifying a nomenclature for first-century Israelite religion is necessary. The structure and content of the study itself will dictate, for the most part, which specific expression or practice of Yahwism is under consideration. This is because often the very nature of legitimation is to pit the validity of the social world being legitimated against that of the most immediate source of threat to that validity. The group generating the conflict necessitating legitimating efforts is likely the group whose symbolic universe will be referenced in discussion, governing the use of terminology.

In addition, Luke will often appeal in his narrative world to those traditions, values, and beliefs that are universal to an Israelite cosmology. In other words, Luke's legitimization formula will embrace overarching Israelite worldview components that are common to all expressions and variations of Yahweh worship. In these discussions, *Israelite* and *Israel* will most often provide the most accurate reference.

#### 4 Locating this Study in the Literature

Existing literature does not adequately address the questions listed in the above introduction; instead, it is generally satisfied to allow this narrative passage (Acts 18:24–19:7) to serve a simple historical purpose in an assumed broader historiographical program. Especially glaring is scholarship's deficiency in any interpretive integration of the Ephesian disciple pericope into Luke's larger purpose for writing Acts. With one notable exception (Esler 1994), neither does the literature provide any literary or social-science-critical treatment of the Acts' glossolalia accounts.

In the first of two of his works to be considered, Esler (1994) states that "it is clear that in this narrative [the Cornelius event] the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles, manifested in glossolalia, serves as the final and irrefutable legitimization for the acceptance of the Gentiles into the community" (38).<sup>18</sup> This finding directly contributes to this study's argument that glossolalia emerged within the Jesus group as a supreme marker for qualifying Gentile converts for in-group inclusion. Although Esler recognises glossolalia as a social boundary, he fails to appreciate its full significance in Luke's narrative as a central marker in an alternative purity map representing the new group's symbolic universe. For example, although Esler identifies a social role for glossolalia and assigns a legitimization significance to the

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<sup>18</sup> Compare to Neyrey (1991): "Hence, God was reversing the status of unclean Gentiles when the Holy Spirit was poured on them, as in the case of Cornelius . . ." (297).

narrative, he stops short of explicitly comparing glossolalia with circumcision (the traditional social boundary marker of all Judaisms), and thus fails to explore its role in purity boundary conflicts related to Luke's construction of the Jesus group's developing symbolic universe.

Another Esler work (1987) is significant because of the contribution to this study of its sociological approach to Luke-Acts. Esler largely rejects formal theology as a Lucan strategy. He provides an interesting discussion of the inadequacy of interpreting Luke as a theologian who was removed from the powerful ebb and flow of cultural currents. In a critique of Conzelmann, Esler characterizes this attitude as reducing Luke to an "armchair theorist, who ponders over purely religious questions before issuing forth from his scriptorium to enlighten his fellow-Christians . . ." (Esler 1987, 1). This study's approach resonates with Esler in that it assumes an indispensable cause-effect relationship between the author's text and the host culture within which it was produced. But where Esler proceeds to develop his socio-redaction criticism grounded in sociological analysis of textual particulars, this study will argue that Luke was motivated to draw on systems within prevalent cosmology and at a higher level of abstraction than Esler's approach indicates. Esler presents a concise and persuasive case for a social science methodology in biblical literary interpretation and identifies and adopts, as does this study, a legitimization purpose for Luke-Acts.<sup>19</sup> Following a description and defence of his methodology, Esler's primary aim "is to analyse the interrelationships between Luke's theology and the social and political pressures upon this community" (24). In other words, Esler's goal is to identify social factors that motivated Luke to write what he did, including the development of his theological themes. Esler's concern with showing that Luke intended to legitimate Gentile fellowship with Israelites within the Jesus community is illustrated by his analysis of the Cornelius account. He considers the Cornelius account awkwardly inserted

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<sup>19</sup> In fact, this work will draw on Esler's defence and explication of Luke's legitimization strategy, although this dependence is not exclusive.

into the narrative for this legitimation purpose. However, he fails to address the mention of glossolalia in this account, perhaps because he fails to see the overarching significance of the entire purity conflict theme in Acts. Contrary to Esler, this study argues that the Cornelius account is quite logically placed in the narrative as a watershed event within the legitimation formula, considering the purity conflict that generates the need for legitimation. The Cornelius incident is key to documenting the legitimacy of the new purity map, signalled by Luke's narrative bookends to this event—Peter's vision at the opening end and his apology to the Jerusalem circumcision group at the closing end.

Esler addresses the legitimation of specific dimensions of social concerns (e.g., table fellowship), but fails to see that Luke legitimates the Jesus group at the highest theoretical level of a symbolic universe. By focusing on social scenarios, Esler misses the overarching legitimation program of Luke in Acts, a program that makes more reasonable sense of the literary organization of the material. Berger and Luckmann's (1966) identification of levels of legitimation mentioned above sheds light on the contrast between Esler's arguments detailing Luke's legitimation and this study's argument. Esler's analysis of Luke's legitimation of individual institutions within a society (92–95) is described as a different type and level than legitimation of a symbolic universe (104–112). The difference is described primarily as one of conceptual abstraction and sophistication. Whereas Esler focuses on Luke's legitimation of social institutions, this study examines Luke's legitimation of the entire symbolic universe.<sup>20</sup>

Also, Esler ignores completely the Apollos-Ephesian disciple pericope, the analysis of which is the ultimate focus of this study. While both works adopt a literary approach, we are not searching for specific sociological identifiers of Luke's community. Instead, we are

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<sup>20</sup> Esler (1987) does make the statement that Luke is "legitimizing Christianity vis-à-vis Judaism," but in the socio-political context of appealing to ancestral faith to validate Roman converts' participation in the Jesus community.

seeking to trace Luke's legitimation strategy and its underlying conflict motivation in order to understand the literary and social significance of the Ephesian disciples pericope.

Brawley (1987, 5) identifies Luke's purpose as legitimation of the Jesus movement and treats Luke-Acts as "an integral literary product," as does this project. Brawley's work brings focus to the temple and Jerusalem as "the point of contact between the divine and human worlds" (5).<sup>21</sup> Although this language resonates strongly with our cosmological discussion, Brawley does not explore how Luke uses the temple as a cosmological device foundational to legitimating an entire perception of reality. What Brawley fails to address is that Luke uses the temple as a primary legitimating device both as the centre of the Israelite cosmos and as a prominent literary prop in Luke's narrative. Brawley is particularly valuable in tracing Luke's legitimation devices and comparing them to literature contemporary to Luke-Acts. This is Brawley's primary contribution to this project.<sup>22</sup> Brawley furthermore makes a good argument against the characterization of Acts as a demonstration of the Temple cult's rejection of the Jesus movement. However, contrary to Brawley, who promotes Pauline legitimation as a primary emphasis of Acts, this project argues that legitimation of Paul was a Lucan device that served the larger purpose of legitimizing the entire movement, including the movement's symbolic universe. In other words, Brawley sees Luke using the Acts narrative to legitimate Paul. We instead argue that Luke uses Paul in the narrative to demonstrate the broader,

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<sup>21</sup> See also Green (1995, 4–6), who recognizes the key role of the temple in Luke's literature, identifies it as a cultural and economic centre, and describes the positive-to-negative characterization of the temple in Luke's Gospel, but fails to recognize the cosmological implications the temple brings to Luke-Acts. Green (5) quotes Geertz (1983) describing cultural centres [such as the Jerusalem temple] as connected in some odd fashion "with the way the world is built" but does not detect that Luke may be appealing to cosmological systems in demonstrating the legitimacy of Jesus and his followers.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Brawley (1987) states, "Legitimation is thus a key to the entire structure of Acts" (53). This study's assumption of Luke's legitimation purpose is based on this and other works that satisfactorily establish this conclusion; e.g., Esler (1987), Maddox (1982), and Cadbury (1958). Cadbury (1958) states "It may well be supposed that Luke intended to show the legitimacy of Christianity from both the Jewish and Gentile standpoint" (306).

expanding legitimacy of the Jesus group's symbolic universe directly to the *Diaspora* and broader Gentile communities.

Neyrey's (1991) chapter, entitled "The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts: 'They Turn the World Upside Down,'" presents themes and discussions that parallel parts of this thesis. Neyrey proposes that Jesus' strategy (as documented in Luke's Gospel) is at least partially explained as purity remapping. By this he means Jesus intended to reinterpret the purity map of temple-based Judaism, including redefining holiness and the related purity boundaries. Neyrey also lays a foundation for the purity conflict theme in his discussion of Jesus' challenges to the purity boundaries within Judaisms prevalent throughout Palestine. However, Neyrey only perceives Jesus as tinkering with the existing purity map, redefining or refining certain boundaries (again, like Esler, focusing on institutions within the symbolic universe), failing to appreciate the Jesus group's much broader and cosmologically supported *renovation* of the purity map. Reading Luke-Acts as legitimation narrative argues that Luke purposed to validate an alternative purity map that emerged following Pentecost. Neyrey, seeming not to appreciate the legitimation motive behind Luke-Acts, neglects that Luke's legitimation program proceeded on the foundation of cosmological evidences and arguments, such as the veil rending (Luke 23:45), Pentecost (Acts 2:1–41), miracle stories (Acts 2:43; 3:1–10; 4:33; 5:12–16), and the Ananias-Sapphira event (Acts 5:1–11). While Neyrey's discussion points to Luke's treatment of the specific influence of Jesus on the existing social structures of Palestine, it fails to address the revision of the Israelite symbolic universe initiated and executed by God himself, thus involving, in Luke's conception, cosmological events and awareness. Our argument that Luke was consciously employing cosmological concepts in legitimating his emerging symbolic universe of the Jesus group (and its reformed purity map) is essential to apprehending Luke's literary scheme. It is this purity conflict theme, which drives the need to legitimize the Jesus'

movement's symbolic universe, that provides the interpretive lens through which the Ephesian disciples pericope should be analysed. The Ephesian disciples encounter was not inserted simply to account for a deviant initiation rite (John's baptism) at Ephesus. It was inserted as integral to legitimating the symbolic universe that was resisted within the group and rejected from without the group.

Salevao's (2002) analysis of the legitimation program in the letter to the Hebrews is particularly informative to this study methodologically. Salevao proposes that the Hebrews author's intent was to legitimate Christianity through the construction and maintenance of a symbolic universe of the Hebrews religious community.<sup>23</sup> A summary of Salevao is informative: when a symbolic universe becomes problematic, the need arises to legitimate the symbolic universe to those society members who are troubled by perceived problems. This need is intensified when the problems are perceived by members of another society with a competing view of reality (symbolic universe) or a heretical group within the host society. The host society is pressed to legitimate the original symbolic universe to those members influenced by the deviant symbolic universe. Or, conversely, the deviant symbolic universe must be legitimized to its members. Luke's motivation for writing Luke-Acts is explained by this precise scenario.

Another work employing a parallel methodology is McGrath (2001). As with Salevao, McGrath analyses the legitimation program in John's Gospel, a different New Testament document than we are considering. However, McGrath's thesis is that John's purpose is legitimation and he provides valuable methodological models to our study.

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<sup>23</sup> The term *symbolic universe*, defined above from Berger and Luckmann, is used by Esler (1987, 18) and extensively by Neyrey (1990; 1991, 271–304). Neyrey (1990) uses *symbolic universe* as a synonym for *cosmos* (14–15).

These previous two works are mentioned to establish the methodological validity of this study and to account for a significant source of its foundational approach to analyzing Luke's legitimization purpose.

The prevalence of conflict, particularly involving purity issues, argues that the need to legitimate the Jesus movement motivated Luke to write Luke-Acts. The Jesus group represented the deviant symbolic universe relative to historical Israelite Yahwism. Throughout Acts, threats to the Jesus community's symbolic universe, and its derived purity map, come from both outside (Israelite non-members) and within (Jesus followers of the circumcision persuasion<sup>24</sup>). Although Salevao does not address the Lucan corpus in his work, his methodology and the associated models are very helpful to this study. It is this same approach we intend to apply to Acts, albeit for a different purpose. Salevao states that the author's legitimating purpose is reflected in the form and content of his theological argumentation. In this study's focus, Luke's legitimating purpose is reflected in cosmology and purity conflict themes.

Two categories of literature should also be considered in order to more fully locate this study in existing scholarship. One category encompasses the commentaries on Acts, particularly their treatment of the Ephesian disciples pericope. Summarily, these works fail to address our introductory questions in a satisfactory way. Generally, these works identify Apollos and/or the twelve Ephesian disciples either as followers of John the Baptist (Williams 1964, Polhill 1992, Walasky 1998, Ludemann 1987, Larkin 1995, Talbert 1997), later converts to the Baptist's movement (Witherington 1998), or recipients of a deficient teaching about baptism that perpetuated John's mode of baptism (Newman 1972, Howard 1980, Munck 1967, Conzelmann 1987, Blaiklock 1980). There is also disagreement among the commentaries concerning whether Luke intended the Apollos account to be directly associated with the

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<sup>24</sup> See for example Acts 11:2–18 (“the circumcised believers . . .”), 15:1, 5 (“Then some of the believers who belong to the party of the Pharisees . . . said, ‘The Gentiles must be circumcised . . .’”), and 21:20–25.



Ephesian disciple encounter. For example, Conzelmann (1987) argues against the two events being intentionally related and proposes to interpret them independent of each other. Some refer to the strangeness of the location of this pericope in the literature (Walaskay 1998, Williams 1964, Blaiklock 1980), while others attempt to explain its purpose here in various ways. For example, Polhill (1992) holds that the purpose of this pericope was to demonstrate that a *completed* disciple of John the Baptist *was* a Christian. Conzelmann (1987), following Haenchen, suggests that Luke inserts the pericope here and locates it at Ephesus to show that Paul won over the sects (159). Bruce (following Lampe) proposes that Luke initializes Paul's Ephesus ministry by drawing parallels to Peter's ministry at Samaria (cf. Peter's laying on of hands at Samaria), thus identifying Ephesus as a new centre of the Jesus movement and its missionary programs (1977).

Contrary to all commentaries, a reading of Luke-Acts as legitimization literature indicates that the baptism of John mentioned in the defined pericope described an alternative (and deviant to the group's norm) initiation rite, perhaps designed to marginalize Gentile converts. This alternative initiation was motivated by a circumcision-loyal devotion to protect God's holiness, now resident in the Jesus community, from defilement by uncircumcised believers. This theory argues that the twelve Ephesian disciples were Gentile believers in Jesus who were converted under Apollos' influence. Thus, Luke addresses this particular expression of purity conflict by using the Apollos character as a misguided (but salvageable) spokesperson for resistance to the new purity map. The Apollos character is contrasted with Paul's resolution of the matter, attended by an event (glossolalia) previously established in Acts as a divinely-initiated marker of purity.

Another category of literature relevant to this study is that which addresses Acts glossolalia passages. Esler (1994) was mentioned above. Johnson (1998) includes a chapter

analysing glossolalia as recorded in both Acts and 1 Corinthians. While Johnson applies social scientific criticism throughout this work, his discussion of glossolalia primarily focuses on the authenticity and nature of the phenomenon. His comments that glossolalia “shows that people of Asia have also received the Holy Spirit and that this baptism in Jesus is greater than that of John’s” and that “Acts treats glossolalia as a nonambiguous symbol of the Spirit’s presence and a sign of the mission’s success” indicate only a shallow application of social analysis (1998, 119, 120). Virtually all other glossolalia literature can be categorized as pneumatological (Bruner 1970, Menzies 1991, Dunn, 1970, Sauer 1954, Stronstad 1985, Turner 1980, et al.), phenomenological (Williams 1981), or psychological (Lovekin 1985, Kildahl 1972, Hine 1965). Although this list does not exhaust all the literature addressing glossolalia within each of these categories, it provides examples of such literature. This brief review of glossolalia scholarship points toward the lack of studies helpful in understanding glossolalia more nearly within the Acts community’s social and cultural mindset.

The hypothesis that existing literature does not address, and that more satisfactorily answers our introductory questions, is that this pericope is a component of Luke’s legitimization purpose. The emerging purity map of the Jesus group identified Gentile converts as in-group members, qualified to be fully socialized into the community. This produced conflict with those of the circumcision group who insisted to the Jerusalem council that Gentile converts be circumcised (Acts 15:5), accepting the traditional covenantal boundary marker of Israelite purity. Following their defeat at the Jerusalem council (this hypothesis will argue), the circumcision group may have propagated a new attempt to marginalize Gentile converts by preventing their receiving the Holy Spirit with evidential glossolalia.<sup>25</sup> The provision for

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<sup>25</sup> Luke’s references to a seeming consensus among the Council participants regarding the resolution of the conflict (Acts 15:22, 25, 28) does not mitigate the fact that the Pharisee group’s insistence for Gentile circumcision (Acts 15:5) was in fact defeated. We cannot assume that all Jesus group members biased against Gentile inclusion were persuaded by the Council’s official action, especially those who did not participate.

marginalized participation in the temple system represented by the Court of Gentiles supports the Judean mentality that might sponsor such a teaching. The long-standing (by this time) example of marginalizing non-Israelite participants within the temple would suggest to the circumcision group the appropriateness of duplicating this provision within the Jesus group. Such a teaching would be contrary to the official decision of the Jerusalem council (which Paul supported unequivocally) and thus deviant to the Jesus movement's emerging orthodoxy. This internal threat to a primary institution of the Jesus group's symbolic universe motivated Luke to address it in the account of these events at Ephesus. This hypothesis best integrates this pericope into an overarching Acts purpose and most satisfactorily answers the questions posed to this text in the above introduction. This study will argue that Luke demonstrates in Acts that the Jesus movement increasingly understood glossolalia as a pre-eminent new marker of qualification for inclusion in the purity in-group and, therefore, that circumcision serves sociologically as an interpretive paradigm of glossolalia.

### **5 The Purity Conflict Background to Luke's Legitimation Purpose**

In order to effectively locate the Ephesian disciple pericope in the legitimation plan of Luke-Acts, we must trace Luke's argument from its outset, including the way the evidence is organized against the background of purity conflicts.<sup>26</sup> If purity conflict is the background against which Luke inserts the Ephesian disciple pericope, we must outline a basic understanding of purity

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Although Luke describes Peter's circumcision group critics as ultimately rejoicing that God had "granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18), this rejoicing did not prevent the conflict that precipitated the Council. In addition, a collectivist society's strong value on group cohesion would dictate that Luke present unanimity around the decision in order to guard the group's integrity and protect the legitimacy of the decision itself. Given the delicacy of the circumcision issue years later (21:20-25), we are assured the conflict was in no way universally or permanently resolved.

<sup>26</sup> Tyson (1983, 303–327) provides an overview of *conflict* as a literary device in Luke's Gospel. Tyson presents this overview as an example of his conviction that conflict or opposition is "a fundamental theme in narrative literature" (313). Tyson's is an exclusively literary-critical treatment of conflict that fails to appreciate the social purpose of the author in how he uses conflict to promote his purpose of legitimation.

systems upon which to build our analysis. This outline is important to the methodological validity of applying “a sociology of knowledge model for understanding the legitimation of Christian communities provided by Second Testament writings” (Craffert 1996, 50). As Craffert (1996, 50) points out, “the real challenge for a historical aim of interpretation is determining the specific shape those functions take in a particular society.” Purity is understood first by reviewing human cultures generally and their need to impose order on the perceived world around them. From this general understanding, we will consider the purity system specifically associated with Israelite cosmology. It was the various forms and applications of the Israelite purity system that were threatened by the revised definition and application of purity by the Jesus group. The threat was both outward from the Jesus-followers’ community, to the purity system represented by the temple cult, and inward, to those Jesus followers who remained loyal to the temple purity system (the circumcision group).<sup>27</sup> The conflict this threat produced, then, was both external (between the Jesus group and the larger Israelite society represented in various Judaisms, especially its leaders), and internal (between the circumcision group and the rest of the Jesus group). Understanding the threat that produced the conflicts (which in turn prompted Luke’s legitimation literature) is necessary to fully explore the meaning and significance of glossolalia described in the Ephesian disciple encounter.

### 5.1 Purity Worldviews and Purity Mapping

Necessary to tracing Luke’s construction and legitimation of the Jesus’ group’s symbolic universe is a review of the conceptual material controlling Luke’s worldview. As stated above, “Construing a document in its pastness means that not only the meaning of words and sentences

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<sup>27</sup> For simplicity, we will refer in this study to Israelites outside the Jesus group as *Israelites* and to Jesus followers who remained passionately loyal to the temple cult as the *circumcision group*. Because we will discuss both internal and external conflict related to the Jesus movement, it is important to distinguish between these two groups who were threatened by the Jesus’ group’s purity map.

but also the ideology, values, customs, and social structures presupposed in a document, as well as the possible interaction between audience and document . . . are limited by the socio-cultural matrix in which it is produced ” (Craffert 1996, 46). This section will provide a conceptual foundation for apprehending Luke’s conceptual machinery in the next chapter.

All ancient cultures functioned with conceptually-defined belief systems that explained the organization and operation of the cosmos, and these systems were actualized by drawing lines of distinction between pure-impure and clean-unclean (a purity map) (deSilva 1982, 248–249).<sup>28</sup> In the abstract description provided by anthropology, all cultures view the cosmos in terms of organization and order.<sup>29</sup> In pre-scientific, pre-industrial, agrarian cultures, views about the content and order of the cosmos were not compartmentalized into sacred and secular. In fact, such categories are virtually irrelevant in discussing the first-century Mediterranean world. Based on the works of Douglas (1966, 1982), Eliade (1987), Neyrey (1990), Rohrbaugh (1996), Malina (2001), and Hanson and Oakman (1998), the following identification of fundamental cosmology features provides a basic model for our consideration:

- The existence of divine beings is assumed. Gods are always perceived as powerful sources of danger and benefit. A god may inflict misery and destruction or bestow pleasure and blessings. As a result, it is critical for humans to know what provokes a god’s displeasure and avoid it, or to identify what activities please a god and perform them. It is also important to define a god’s locus of existence and to honour it properly. This awareness and understanding of divinity and related issues form

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<sup>28</sup> DeSilva references Robert C. T. Parker (“Pollution, the Greek concept of,” in *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization*, ed. Sion Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, Oxford University Press, 1998) extensively for evidence of purity regulations related to Greek cosmology. DeSilva also refers to Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* and Epictetus to illustrate acute pollution awareness in Greek literature.

<sup>29</sup> Cosmology generally includes propositions about the origin of the cosmos. However, to aid in clarity, where necessary we will refer to considerations of origins as *cosmogony*.

the most fundamental motivation of religion in traditional cultures and a primary motivation for their social ordering and dynamics.

- All traditional cosmologies produced classification systems, some more elaborate than others. Most basic to these systems were the categories of *sacred* and *profane*. Objects, time, space, and living beings were identified as sacred or profane. Those things classified as sacred were those that were designated for and compatible with divinity. Things regarded as profane were not compatible with divinity and could be offensive or degrading to the divine being. Such classification systems significantly influenced the formation of social order and social dynamics of the related cultures.
- Ancient cultures also produced systems of purity classification, which may be quite complex and may be subcategories of sacred and profane. Purity was generally a status classification related to the sacred. That which was defiled (unclean, not pure) was incompatible with divine presence or with any place, person, object, or time that may be considered sacred. Purity, then, was a status condition as much as a quality. Most objects, spaces, times, animals, and people had a designated purity status. In order for humans to enjoy divine blessing and avoid divine curse, divinity must be protected from the offence of impurity and honoured by that which was pure.
- The status of impurity was often understood as potentially contagious. Impurity could be transferred through contact, thus defiling what was pure. That which was clean must be somehow quarantined from defilement. A cosmological ordering of sacred/profane, clean/unclean, as perceived and honoured by any specific culture had to be carefully maintained so as to garner divine blessing and avoid divine retribution. Boundaries were adopted to prevent defilement and maintain purity

status and prevent desecration of the holy. The boundaries ranged in institutional rigidity from simple social custom to codified law and were enforced with a comparable range of consequences.

These highly generalized and simplified components encompass the basic elements of all traditional cosmologies. These conceptual belief systems applied strict order to the cosmos in terms of hierarchies of beings, cause-and-effect relationships, and power/energy dynamics; the order included sacred/profane and purity classification systems related to deity, and the culture's members were required to observe these systems in order to experience the most beneficial relationship possible with the patron deity. This basic cosmology pervaded preindustrial societies, influencing every aspect of life. It was codified legally, perpetuated in customs, and formalized and ritualized in religions. Social order, politics, and economics were greatly influenced by the prevailing cosmology of any given society.

Societies depended on the gods' favours for success in all dimensions of life. Cosmological awareness was expected of all societies' residents. Although religious systems competed for dominance within and between societies, this dominance was of lesser importance than that all individuals and groups acknowledged and honoured some religion with its associated purity system. Honouring the cosmology-sponsored purity systems created and maintained order in the universe, and consequently in day-to-day society.<sup>30</sup>

Neyrey's (1990, 27) vocabulary is helpful in marshalling the cosmological concepts and discussion. He refers to the patterns of order, encoded in purity definitions, regulations, and customs, as (purity) *maps*. The mapping of persons, places, things, and time was common to all societies and reflected a society's perception of the cosmos (cosmology). A common phenomenon

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<sup>30</sup> This discussion of the danger/blessing motivation fuelling purity systems within a society's symbolic universe is a distilled summation of Douglas' *Purity and Danger* and its treatment in Neyrey's *Paul, In Other Words* and *The Social World of Luke-Acts*.

of all cultures is the tendency to structure the world in which they live through systems of classification, identifying components of life according to purity categories or statuses (Neyrey 1991, 273–276). These classifications were defined and enforced by boundaries, and these boundaries could include regulations, customs, physical and behavioural markers, and other social features that emphasize and maintain a purity map. Each society drew the *boundaries* in different places on the maps, which were intended to impose order on its particular cosmos, and the things that were bounded changed from one society to another. Common to all societies, however, was a concept of the cosmos that could be articulated, to various degrees, in terms of a purity map (a subset of the symbolic universe).

The purity map is a way of referring to the social and religious institutions that concretized the abstractions of a cosmology.<sup>31</sup> Thus, objects, people, and events all had a prescribed place and role in each society. This place was defined in terms of geography, time, and association with other objects, people, and events. Through the vocabulary of purity mapping, we are able to analyse and compare various symbolic universes. For example, we might compare the meaning and boundaries related to table fellowship in various Judaismisms (who was accepted at table, what foods could be eaten, where meals were taken, and so forth) to those common to various forms of paganism. Purity boundaries related to pagan temples and shrines might be compared to those observed in association with the Jerusalem temple and synagogues of the *Diaspora*. Where on the purity map (geographically, temporally, and so forth) would a society or religious system locate a divine presence, especially a manifest presence? Acts narrates the emergence of a symbolic universe within the developing Jesus movement that was a modified version of traditional Israelite and the contemporary temple cult's symbolic universes. Not only did an emerging purity map redefine purity boundaries,

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<sup>31</sup> See Berger (1967, 38–48) for a sociological discussion of the relationship between subjective/objective realities and social institutions and *nomoi*, and as these phenomena relate to legitimation.



the modified symbolic universe relocated the intersection of divine-human activity from the temple to the Jesus community. This emerging symbolic universe, with its modified Israelite cosmology, generated the conflicts that motivated Luke's legitimation literature. This conflict required the legitimation of a new "reality," including a new locus of divine presence and activity, new purity boundaries separating pure from profane, and new social conventions for the merging of previously estranged social groups. Luke's intent (his legitimating formula) was to demonstrate the legitimacy of the Jesus movement as an authentic Judaism by tracing the emergence of its valid symbolic universe (with its modified purity map). Thus, *Theophilus*<sup>32</sup> might be fully assured of the legitimacy of the boundaries, principles, and practices prescribed by that revised map, and the conceptual framework on which it was built. This symbolic universe is the representation of the social world's (Jesus group, in this case) perception of reality. From this point, we will use this mapping language prominently in discussing Luke's undergirding literary structure and historical organization.

## 5.2 The Symbolic Universe of First-Century Israelite Religion

There are significant challenges related to describing Israelite purity maps of the first century. One such challenge is avoiding the myriad tangential discussions and arguments about details and interpretations of the temple cult, its historical evolution, and the minutiae related to its status throughout various first-century Judaisms. The literature regarding Israelite purity is voluminous and complex, and rich toward understanding the development and application of culturally specific rules, customs, and attitudes. However, most of it is not germane to our need for a basic understanding of the purity conflict background to Luke's literature. The most

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<sup>32</sup> I use *Theophilus* as a symbol of Luke's audience, whoever they may be. I assume Luke addressed a community of Jesus followers as ultimate beneficiaries of his writings, but that will not be argued in this study. (See Esler, chapter 2 and his Epilogue.) Esler summarizes a convincing argument that Luke's audience was a Christian community rather than either a pagan or unconverted Israelite audience.

practical description best suited to our analysis of Luke's writings should be simple, defining major categories of the holy-profane and clean-unclean. Our description should identify the locus of divine activity, the boundaries (including those that define space, persons, time, and things) that protect divine presence from defilement, and the fundamental ordering of society produced by the purity map.<sup>33</sup>

A key feature of Israelite cosmology and thus its symbolic universe is its origin. The Israelite purity map was founded in the covenant history of Israel and, as such, was seen to be established by God (Douglas 1966, xv, 62, 63; Douglas in Poorthuis, et al. 1999, 37–38, 45).<sup>34</sup> Deeply and historically embedded in Israelite self-consciousness was the conviction that the cosmos was created and ordered by God and Israelite cosmology was authored (through divine-to-human communication) by God. This pervasive cosmology gave any variation of an Israelite purity map perceived authority, in Israelite opinion, over conflicting maps of other socio-religious groups. The significance of identifying God as the author of the Israelite purity map (in whatever version) cannot be overemphasized. The legitimacy of Israelite cosmology is founded on this understanding.<sup>35</sup> Any attempt by Luke to legitimize the Jesus movement over and against the temple cult and prevailing Judaisms necessarily must account for God's initiation and authorship of the Israelite purity map. In other words, if the Jesus movement is legitimate at traditional Judaisms' expense, it must be shown that God participated in the process

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<sup>33</sup> We will consider only Second Temple Judaism, since that is the system against which Luke is presenting his legitimation. Since the exact identity and location of Luke's audience is unknown, the variants of Judaism that may have influenced subtleties of the conflicts cannot be identified. Because the process of legitimation requires locating people and events in historical authority, the Old Testament is a necessary and effective source. We need not, however, explore the details of early (Levitical) purity maps.

<sup>34</sup> Douglas also identifies direct correlation between the creation account and the purity laws. (Re. creation account as purity paradigm, see also Eilberg-Schwartz 1987, 358).

<sup>35</sup> Douglas argues against a hygienic, ethical, or socio/agricultural classification system as the foundation for Judaism's purity system. This covenant foundation gives the purity system (as detailed in Leviticus, for example) a powerful ability to effect coherence in the culture governed by it. The meaning of purity in Leviticus, for example, is part of the general structure of the cosmos.

(of cosmological proportions) by which the movement emerged, specifically by authoring the revisions to His own historically prescribed purity system. Demonstrating God's initiative is crucial to Luke's legitimation program, including marking the flesh of "clean" people with glossolalic phenomena.

The covenants initiated by God established a prescribed order to the cosmos by identifying what was holy and what was profane. The Law, also authored by God and issued by His own initiative, codified the observance and maintenance of the order created by the covenant. The Israelite cosmos (symbolic universe), then, is founded in the covenants, which defined the broad fundamental categories of holiness—geographic space and a people group.<sup>36</sup> The Israelites were God's people by covenant, set aside to uniquely relate to Him and represent His presence and authority in the world. This relationship was to be conducted from the land of promise, Israel, and was to extend outward until the entire world was subjugated to the reign of Yahweh.

The descendants of Abraham were holy, belonging to God, and commissioned with certain privileges and responsibilities. Gentiles, by contrast, were profane, incompatible with holiness, and capable of defiling God's presence. The land of promise was holy, set aside as the residence of God's holy people. The lands outside Israelite Palestine were profane, unfit for God's manifest occupation. Israelite cosmology flowed from this basic categorization of sacred and profane.

Key features of the Israelite symbolic universe include the classification of space, people, time, objects, and events in terms of holy/profane and clean/unclean. Briefly reviewing these

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<sup>36</sup> One way Luke transfers the purity status of covenant people to the Jesus group is linguistically: "As for Luke's conception of the church, the word he uses is not 'church', ἐκκλησία, even if he knows the term, but 'people', λαός, which means Israel as distinguished from all other peoples and nations. There is for Luke only one Israel, the people of God *par excellence*" (Jervell 1972, 13).

classifications will construct the basic purity map over against which the Jesus movement's map must be legitimized.<sup>37</sup>

### ***5.2.1 Holy Space***

A basic tenet of cosmology generally was the idea that physical space occupied by or associated with divinity altered the nature of that space. A partial purpose for the construction of temples, shrines, and holy sites was to designate a bounded space appropriate for the habitation of divinity, even if it were the occasional and temporary visitation. The space on Earth designated as appropriate for a divinity must be treated differently than all other space. Its status as a locus of divine presence or the honouring of divinity must be preserved through boundaries. These boundaries could be codified in laws, perpetuated as social customs (rituals, for example), or constructed as physical boundaries. The idea of circumscribing sacred space with boundaries acknowledged that physical locations on earth that were to be associated with divinity must be treated differently than other space.

The Israelite symbolic universe mapped the holiness of geographic space in detail, including a gradation of degrees of holiness. Rabbinic literature articulates details of the map, listing eleven degrees of geographic holiness:

- 1) The land of Israel is holier than all lands.
- 2) The cities surrounded by a wall are holier than the land.
- 3) The area inside the wall of Jerusalem is holier than any other walled city.
- 4) The Temple mount is more holy than the rest of Jerusalem.
- 5) The rampart is more holy than the other parts of the mount.
- 6) The court of women is more holy than the rampart.
- 7) The court of Israel is more holy than the court of women.
- 8) The court of the priest is more holy than the court of Israel.
- 9) The area between the porch and the altar is more holy than the court of the priest.
- 10) The sanctuary is more holy than this area between the porch and the altar.
- 11) The house of the holy of holies is more holy than they.

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<sup>37</sup> DeSilva (2000) and Neyrey (1988, 1991, and 1990) were particularly helpful in composing this distilled summary of the Israelite purity map and should be consulted for a more detailed description of the mapping of the Israelite symbolic universe.

Thus is the holiness of physical geographic space mapped by Israelite cosmology (Bokser 1985, 290–291).<sup>38</sup>

The preceding discussion from rabbinic literature describes the primary Jewish, derived from prior Israelite, understanding of holy space, space that was designated for varying degrees of the divine presence and use. These designated holy spaces were protected by boundaries, which were both physically constructed and legally prescribed and enforced. For example, the temple areas were marked off with walls and courts. The conquering Romans acquiesced to Israelite cosmological sensitivity by sustaining the proscription of Gentile intrusion into the holy areas of the temple complex. Violation of this proscription was punishable by death, so severe was Israelite loyalty to defending the holy boundaries established by divine covenant.<sup>39</sup> Pilate relented and removed the images of Caesar from the temple after he realized that Judeans were willing to die to protect the holiness of the temple and its surrounds from defilement (Borg 1984, 43).

The custodial responsibility associated with this sacred space dominated Israelite consciousness and, to a great extent, formed Israelite social, political, and religious life. The collective identity of Israelite populations was built upon and energized by the keen awareness that they alone were entrusted with guarding the purity of God's sacred space. Avoiding divine retribution and enjoying divine blessing depended largely on the success of this guardianship role, which was created by covenant (Borg 1984). Simeon the Just linked Torah (the Israelite constitution) and temple in a statement of cosmic proportions: "By three things

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<sup>38</sup> Bokser is quoting m. Kelim 1.6–9. See also, Craffert (1993, 253).

<sup>39</sup> This is attested by the temple inscription described in Hanson and Oakman (1998, 140): "No foreign-born person is to enter the protective enclosure around the temple; whoever does will have only himself to blame for the death that follows."

is the world sustained: by the Law, by the Temple service, and by deeds of loving kindness” (Borg 1984, 52).<sup>40</sup>

The holy land generally and the temple precincts specifically (representing core values of Israelite purity maps) were under siege during the first century through the concretized practices and issues of the Roman occupation. The Roman presence provided a constant reminder to Israelite sensitivities of their failure as custodians of sacred space. In fact, following the Roman annexation of Judea, being a Judean Israelite was increasingly a matter of being holy—the meaning of Yahweh worship, including Israelite nationalism, became focused in holiness. The ensuing purity conflict was an intense, daily reality of the social, political, economic, and religious context of Jesus’ Palestine (Borg 1984, 41–42).<sup>41</sup>

### ***5.2.2 Holy People***

The descendants of Abraham enjoyed a special status in the cosmos relative to God and His interaction with created beings. Those who could be identified as such were God’s people, chosen to exist in unique relationship to Him and to enjoy blessings and favours of significant magnitude. People who were marked by both genealogy and allegiance to covenant conditions and requirements (the Law) were holy people, welcome (conditionally) into the presence of God and uniquely compatible with that presence.

By contrast, non-Israelites (Gentiles) were profane and incompatible with divine presence. Not only were Gentiles to be excluded from holy space, given the contagious quality of impurity, Israelites must avoid contact with Gentiles (or ritually purify themselves following

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<sup>40</sup> Borg is quoting M. Abot 1.2.

<sup>41</sup> In addition to the broad, codified categories of sacred geography relative to the temple, the Israelite concept of sacred space was modified during the intertestament period. These modifications were necessitated by several factors: remoteness from the temple, sectarian isolation (e.g., the Essenes), heightened sensitivities, etc. Sacred space increasingly included any space that was set aside by intent or by activity (such as prayer) for contact with God’s presence (Bokser 1985, 285). This interesting but subtle feature of Israelite cosmology is of a finer detail than our model requires.

such contact) lest they too be rendered impure, disqualified from entrance to the temple, and unfit for the presence of God. The Israelite purity map's classification of people is simple—all people fell into one of these two categories: Israelites, who were holy and therefore compatible with God's presence, and Gentiles, who were profane and therefore potentially defiling to holiness.

The primary boundary marker between holy and profane people was male circumcision, the Abrahamic covenant sign performed in the flesh by obedient Israelites (deSilva 2000, 257). So profound was this boundary in the Israelite purity map that it came to serve as a metonymic reference for Israelites, as in referring to Israelites as those “of the circumcision” or just “the circumcision.” Further evidence of the significance of circumcision as a boundary marker was the requirement that non-Israelite converts to Yahweh worship submit to this procedure. Circumcision was the mark that distinguished in-group holy people from out-group profane people.

Within the in-group (holy people), purity status was not static. Since impurity was contagious, contact with profane or unclean people or objects could render an otherwise holy person unclean. Being unclean meant being incompatible with holiness (for example, the presence of God in the temple) and, consequently, potentially defiling to what was clean. Israelites in a state of impurity represented a serious threat to the covenantal responsibility to guard the holiness of God in the land. Pharisees represented a sectarian effort within Judaism to pressure the Palestine Israelite population to strictly adhere to their custodial responsibilities related to holiness.

### ***5.2.3 Holy Time***

The mapping of time in first-century Judaism related most prominently to the Sabbath. The time contained within the Sabbath day was to be considered holy by Yahweh's decree within

the Mosaic Law. The Torah mandate was established on the precedent of the Genesis 1 creation account (deSilva 2000, 260).<sup>42</sup> The boundaries established within Judaism (originally founded in Mosaic Law but expanded and elaborated by rabbinic contribution) around the Sabbath were extraordinary in complexity and rigidity. The day was holy and thus had to be protected from behaviours and activities that would desecrate the time, bringing potential offence to a holy God. Just as the occupation and use of holy space was guarded from the profane and unclean, so the use of this day was to be set aside from all other days, free of pollution from common or impure activities.

The mapping of time also included designated days of the week for fasting, and annual periods of days for feasts and festivals, all to be used, by definition, for holy purposes. These days were characterized differently than non-feast times and thus occupied a fixed place on the purity map. In addition, Israelite cosmology uniquely recognized other more abstract designations of time, such as eschatological eras.<sup>43</sup> For example, Israelites anticipated a future Day of the Lord, an era in time reserved for the special manifest presence of Yahweh, who would occupy that eschatological season with activities of judgment and restoration. The Day of the Lord was understood in eschatological contrast to “this present age.”

#### ***5.2.4 Holy Objects, Animals, and Events***

Objects designated as holy included the utensils of worship in the temple. The temple building materials and furnishings, especially those used directly in worship rites, would be designated

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<sup>42</sup> Several scholars have demonstrated the paradigmatic role of the Genesis creation account in Israelite cosmology and its purity mapping (In addition to deSilva, see Douglas 1966, 1999, Eilberg-Schwartz 1987, and Eliade 1987). This study anticipates Luke’s references to creation as part of his legitimization of a Jesus-movement cosmology. As previously stated, cosmology assumes propositional accounts of origins and this is certainly true of Judaic cosmology. This cosmogony is primarily represented in the Genesis account and is reflected as foundational to the theology of the Old Testament, especially the wisdom literature (John Collins in Tracy and Lash 1983, 3–4).

<sup>43</sup> Cotter (1999, 4) makes a point of identifying demon expulsion accounts in the Gospels and Acts as uniquely evidential of Israelite cosmology due to their eschatological implications.



as holy and were carefully protected from defilement. Any objects directly associated with the sacred activities of the temple cult were considered holy and were kept apart from other objects and uses in order to prevent contamination.

The Israelite purity maps included elaborate classifications of food purity. For example, certain animals could not be eaten because they were classified as unclean, a status designated to them as a quality of their existence. In fact, all animals fell into purity categories based on Levitical legal codes. But prepared food could also be rendered impure if the Israelite owner did not tithe on certain included ingredients, such as the herbs and spices used in its preparation (cf. Matthew 23:23). Eating utensils were potentially impure if they were improperly cared for or came into contact with unclean persons or objects.

Events such as table fellowship carried not only powerful social implications, but purity implications as well. The participants (with whom one shares table), ingredients (what foods one ate and how they were prepared), and locale (a pure or impure space) were restricted for purity reasons for first-century Israelites. Other common events such as human waste elimination were carefully governed by religious law and social custom, often because of a potential cultic purity defilement of time, space, persons, or other objects (Bokser 1985).

The preceding discussion sketches a generalized model of an Israelite purity map, the classification of holy and pure against that which was profane and impure. We did not consider all of the boundaries that illustrated and regulated these categories in the Israelites' life experience because of the variety of such experiences and because many of these details are not relevant to our analysis of Luke-Acts. Boundary markers will be discussed when they emerge as significant in Luke's literature. For now, the introduction of the temple as the locus of God's manifest presence, the primary physical boundary marker between holy and profane people (circumcision), and the reference to legal prohibitions and prescribed customs will

suffice for our basic background understanding. This outline represents the skeletal elements of the Israelite symbolic universe. These broad categories show how Israelites of the first century understood the organization and purpose of the cosmos and their own role in this order. We should keep in mind that the elaborate Israelite purity map(s) all related to the responsibility of God's covenant people as custodians of the holy presence of the supreme God among humanity on earth.

### ***5.2.5 Non-priestly Purity***

A brief discussion of non-priestly purity may be beneficial, given the breadth of literature that supports the restriction of purity observance to the priesthood. This discussion is relevant to the study at hand because we are exploring Luke's legitimation of the Jesus movement, at the heart of which is intense purity conflict. If the strict observance of purity classifications and boundaries was exclusively a priestly concern, a demonstration legitimizing the remapping of the cosmos would not succeed with Jesus followers who had no background in the temple priesthood. This study will assume the conclusions of Eyal Regev (2000 and in Poorthuis 1996, 223–245), who demonstrates persuasively from archaeological and historical sources that purity awareness and observance pervaded the Israelite population, both in Jerusalem and throughout the Palestinian region (and perhaps into the *Diaspora*). This *hullin*, or non-priestly purity, was practised primarily in the eating of ordinary food in purity. The effectiveness of Luke's cosmological legitimation program depends on a broad identification with purity issues. Illustrating a divinely-initiated modification of the purity map would be less than meaningful to a community that had no local experience with Israelite strict purity systems.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Other sources consulted that confirm Regev are E. P. Sanders and John Poirier. Both Poirier and Sanders contest the views of authors like Gedalyahu Alon and Jacob Neusner who argue for a minimalist view of ritual purity. Sanders and Poirier propose, each from his own perspective, the validity of a maximalist view of purity observances in Second Temple Judaism. This maximalist view argues that purity boundaries were observed independently of the temple system, motivated by objectives other than priestly purity (Poirier 2003 and Sanders 1990).

## **6 Applying a Purity Conflict Analysis to Acts**

The preceding section of information forms a background for the analysis of Acts 18:24–19:7, founded in the hypothesis that the emerging Jesus group's symbolic universe created conflicts with the existing Israelite symbolic universe. The foregoing summary of the major components of this Israelite symbolic universe provides the data necessary to identify components of the narrative that refer to, assume, or describe points of conflict between these purity systems.

Identifying these points of conflict should illustrate the prevalence of purity conflict in Luke-Acts and establish this conflict as a primary and organizing theme in the literature. By organizing theme, we mean to say that Luke's need and intent to address the conflicts between the established purity map of Judaism with the emerging Jesus group's revisions of that map lay behind the organization of the narrative. For example, this study will argue that Luke locates the Pentecost event closely after the rending of the veil to demonstrate a major relocation of the purity centre of the cosmos. It will also argue that the first seven chapters of Acts narrate events of the Jesus group juxtaposed with the temple system and its personnel as an intentional demonstration of the superiority of this relocated purity centre. These are examples supporting our hypothesis that much of the organization of the Acts material is explained by Luke's intent to legitimate the Jesus group's emerging symbolic universe. It is against the purity map described above that Luke seeks to demonstrate the validity, even superiority, of the Jesus group's purity map.

This study will demonstrate that the Ephesian disciple encounter account represents such a point of purity conflict, and its insertion intentionally addresses the conflict as part of Luke's overall legitimization program. In order to recognize this evidence, the preceding summary of the Israelite symbolic universe will be referenced throughout. Although it seems like a circuitous route, exploring the larger picture of purity conflict in the literary structure is foundational to

an analysis of the Ephesian disciple passage under inspection. A goal of this study is to identify a probable purpose for this account (Acts 18:24–19:7) within the overarching narrative and social purpose of the Acts document.<sup>45</sup> The purpose for the inclusion and structuring of this pericope will inform our understanding of the literary and social scientific role and significance of glossolalia in Luke's Acts generally and this pericope specifically.

## **7 Summary**

This study will show that Luke, following the Gospel writers and adding to them, created a symbolic universe to legitimate the institutional order of the early Jesus community, that institutional order being the purity map forged to protect the holiness that resided in the collectivity of Jesus followers. More specifically, Luke carefully designed a literary apparatus to maintain the symbolic universe of his readers. The emerging purity map and the symbolic universe that it represented and depended on for legitimacy were at odds with the purity map and symbolic universe of established first-century Judaism. This dynamic tension, with the various narrated conflicts, provides the background against which to understand Luke's social-narrative treatment of glossolalia generally and specifically within the Ephesian disciple pericope.

## **8 Acknowledging Limitations**

There are several limitations to this project that must be identified here. The first is the scope of the application of the legitimation model and its various implications. Comprehensively defending the application of the sociology of knowledge model (legitimation) and demonstrating that Luke's purpose for writing was the legitimation of the Jesus movement's symbolic universe could consume a lengthy study by itself, especially if all the ramifications were explored and

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<sup>45</sup> Acts is considered throughout this study as Volume 2 of the two-volume narrative literature produced by Luke. Luke's Gospel will be considered when appropriate to trace literary organization and themes that bear directly on our analysis of Acts and the pericope under examination.

potential objections considered. Purpose discourages and space prohibits such exhaustive consideration. This study will not attempt to analyse every substantiating piece of evidence for this hypothesis or try to anticipate and respond to all possible objections. Nor will this study be distracted by comparing this hypothesis to every existing theory related to Luke's intent for writing or his program of content development. In addition, we will not explore any interpretive implications suggested by this study other than what was identified as the study's focus. In other words, except for the glossolalia and Ephesian disciples passages, extensive textual exegesis will be avoided in favour of surveying the literature's content and organization for evidence of Luke's legitimating programme. This study does not replace or compete with existing exegetical methods. Instead, it examines the literature at a different level, hopefully producing insights to enhance the exegetical work of others.

It may appear that the arguments to be developed in this study offer implications related to historical-critical issues surrounding Luke-Acts. For example, cosmological concepts and references behind the text could inform a discussion about Luke's audience. Cosmological arguments may indicate Luke intended his documents to be persuasive to an audience composed of both Israelites and Gentiles, appealing to commonly-held perceptions and beliefs about the cosmos. Although interesting, this study will avoid these historical critical issues (a potential issue related to dating the document was mentioned in an earlier note).

Theological considerations will also be avoided, not only because they are not germane to this research, but also because there is such an extensive body of literature already in existence related to every possible theological category. Deriving theological propositions from the text represents an entirely different methodology.

This study will assume the validity and effectiveness of social scientific analyses of biblical texts and combining such analyses with other critical methodologies and tools.<sup>46</sup> No attempt will be made to argue for such validity or for the superiority of any critical method. Our approach will be explained where appropriate and necessary, but its validity will be assumed from the voluminous social science literature and successful applications of related methodologies.

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<sup>46</sup> Estrada's note #28 to chapter 1 discusses the lack of social science criticism of Acts. This study is responsive to just such concerns, including my own. Several scholars provide excellent discussions of the validity, even the necessity, of using social science disciplines for biblical criticism and interpretation. I am particularly indebted to Salevao (2002), Esler (1987, 1–16), Rohrbaugh (1996, 7–9), Neyrey (e.g., 1990 and 1991), McGrath (2001), and Malina (e.g., 1993 and 2001) for both the justification and methodology for using social science tools for biblical studies. For a thorough discussion of the validity and effectiveness of combining social-scientific criticism with other critical methods (e.g., literary criticism), see Craffert 1996. This project should not be seen as intending to fully integrate formal critical methodologies, but instead attempts to apply data from the social sciences to analysis of narrative literature in order to expose Luke's underlying conceptual framework and explore the implications of that framework.

## CHAPTER 2

### LUKE'S CONCEPTUAL MACHINERY FOR LEGITIMATING THE JESUS GROUP'S SYMBOLIC UNIVERSE

#### 1 Luke's Legitimation Formula

“All legitimations, from the simplest pretheoretical legitimations of discrete institutionalized meanings to the cosmic establishments of symbolic universes may, in turn, be described as machineries of universe-maintenance” (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 105). This chapter reviews Luke-Acts for evidences of its author's conceptual machinery of universe maintenance of the Jesus movement.<sup>47</sup> What conceptual ingredients did Luke build into his presentation of the Jesus group's symbolic universe such that they would answer all the *why* questions and settle the unresolved uncertainties and disputes relevant to his readers? The ways in which Luke explains the meaning and validity of the Jesus group's reality, its perception of the cosmos, constitute the legitimating formula that Luke intends should carry “conviction to the next generation” (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 62).

#### 1.2 Legitimation as Social Phenomenon and Literary Purpose

The legitimation reading of Luke's writings relies on the authority of sociology for our understanding that legitimation is a necessary and inevitable function for the survival of any social group as a distinct society (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 93; Berger 1967, 29–30). Legitimation efforts must be expected of all social worlds, especially emerging groups and those whose well-being (validity, integrity, cohesiveness, stability, etc.) is threatened or

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<sup>47</sup> Berger (1967, 35): “All legitimation serves to maintain reality—reality, that is, as defined in a particular human collectivity.”

questioned. Berger (1967) states, “Legitimations are answers to any questions about the ‘why’ of institutional arrangements” within a specific social world (community) (29).

Luke’s initial address in his Gospel to Theophilus points to this legitimation purpose:

As many have applied their hand to setting in order a narrative account concerning the matters that have been completed among us, just as eyewitnesses from the beginning gave to us, becoming servants of the word, it occurred to me also, after having investigated for a long time [or, from the beginning], to write everything exactly and successively to you, most noble Theophilus, *so that you might know the certainty of the teachings taught to you* [emphasis mine]. (Luke 1:1–4, my translation)<sup>48</sup>

This prologue language is directed to an in-group member, a believer (community) in need of knowledge or confirmation of the legitimacy of the gospel message upon which the community (social world) was founded. Luke identifies Theophilus (and himself) as multiple generations removed from the Jesus and his original group, not having personal biographic memory of the events he will describe. But Luke has been careful and diligent in confirming the facticity of the events. Luke’s description of his intent to write everything successively (in order) could mean he will write in the order needed to understand the reality of the Jesus’ group’s symbolic universe, in other words, in a conceptually convincing or affirming arrangement.

The purpose of this study does not permit a detailed and exhaustive demonstration of a legitimation reading of Luke’s literature with analyses of all nuances and implications that might be coaxed from the text by our models. However, if a legitimation reading is to build an interpretive context for a sociological analysis of the Ephesian disciples pericope, we must identify Luke’s conceptual machinery, recognizing key elements of legitimation in the language, structure, and themes of the narrative literature. Legitimation requires that Luke is “setting in motion . . . various conceptual machineries designed to maintain the ‘official’

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<sup>48</sup> I understand and use Theophilus as a symbol of Luke’s audience, whoever they may be. I assume Luke addressed a community of Jesus followers as ultimate beneficiaries of his writings, but that will not be argued in this discussion. (See Esler, chapter 2 and his Epilogue.) Esler summarizes a convincing argument that Luke’s audience was a community of Jesus followers rather than either a pagan or unconverted Israelite audience.



universe against [any] heretical challenge” (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 107). Berger and Luckmann (1966, 108) point out that “conceptual machineries of universe-maintenance are themselves products of social activity, as are all forms of legitimation, and can only rarely be understood apart from the other activities of the collectivity in question.” Thus, Luke’s two-volume narrative of the Jesus community’s history forms the social context in which best to trace the conceptual machinery with which he validates the group’s reality and the purity map emerging from it.

To restate, legitimation is, from a sociological perspective, the creation or application of conceptual machinery to justify as meaningful and valid the symbolic universe of a particular society (Salevao 2002, 60). Salevao (2002, 6), following Berger and Luckmann, explains that legitimation is essentially the aggregate of ways a society or social world is explained and justified to its members, including its genesis, maintenance, and continuance. This meaningfulness and validity can be demonstrated in different ways. As presented briefly in the first chapter, Watson (1986, 40), for example, suggests that a sect can legitimate itself in three ways over against the parent group:

- 1) denunciation of opponents,
- 2) antithesis, and
- 3) reinterpretation of the religious traditions of the parent community so that they apply exclusively to the sect.

Evidence of legitimation techniques is expected to emerge from this review of Luke-Acts. An obvious example of Watson’s third legitimation technique is seen in Luke’s repeated demonstration that God initiated the formation of the Jesus group and defined its symbolic universe, with its new purity boundaries. This legitimating device is prominent in Luke-Acts

(signalled through miracle<sup>49</sup>, vision, and oracle accounts) and is a key to Luke's legitimation formula, fulfilling precisely what Berger describes (1967, 33).<sup>50</sup> This chapter will review Luke's literary legitimation schema and several specific devices in his narrative that seem clearly intended to validate the Jesus movement. This review of Luke's conceptual machinery for the legitimation of the Jesus group will establish the narrative social context for the analysis of the Ephesian disciple pericope.

Also presented in the previous chapter, Brawley (1987, 55) identifies "at least six major categories of legitimating techniques . . . :"<sup>51</sup>

- 1) divine approval
- 2) access to divine power
- 3) high motivation
- 4) benefiting others
- 5) possessing a high level of culture
- 6) adhering to an ancient tradition

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<sup>49</sup> Although using the terms *miracle* and *miraculous* when referring to occurrences in NT literature is somewhat anachronistic, it is useful when communicating with modern readers. It should be understood that whenever the term *miracle* is used in this study, it refers to spectacular phenomena that the ancients would have attributed to divine power, magic, or some other exceptional source. This usage is consistent with current NT translations such as NIV and NASB when translating the words δύναμις and σημεῖον (see Acts 2:22; 4:16, 22; 8:13; 19:11).

<sup>50</sup> Compare Watson's third legitimation component to Berger's (1967, 33) comments: "There still remains the problem of legitimation, all the more urgent because of the novelty and thus highly conscious precariousness of the new order. The problem would best be solved by applying the following recipe: let the institutional order be so interpreted as to hide, as much as possible, its *constructed* character. Let that which has been stamped out of the ground *ex nihilo* appear as the manifestation of something that has existed from the beginning of time, . . . ." Instead of allowing the new order of the Jesus movement to appear to be "stamped out of the ground *ex nihilo*," Luke seeks to demonstrate that God himself authored and implemented the new order.

<sup>51</sup> Brawley (1987, 51–67) devotes an entire chapter to identifying legitimating techniques Luke employs in Acts to validate Paul and his representation of the gospel. Brawley supports his analysis of legitimation in Luke-Acts by observing "the conspicuous correspondence between Acts and a wide range of literature from antiquity makes it certain that Luke accommodates to Hellenistic literary devices and adapts them to his purposes" (53). (Cf. Dibelius (1956, 138–191) and Cadbury (1927, 140–209) for earlier treatments of literary parallels.) Whereas Brawley sees Luke's legitimation program directed at Paul, this study proposes that Luke intended to legitimate the symbolic universe of the Jesus movement, and legitimating Paul was only one element supporting that ultimate purpose.

To summarize, legitimation seeks to demonstrate that a symbolic universe is valid (and perhaps superior) in that it accurately and authoritatively reflects the order of reality, both seen and unseen, as defined by a set of ideas, beliefs, traditions, customs, and habits of a society. Berger and Luckmann (1967, 94–96) identify four levels of legitimation while acknowledging that, empirically, these levels overlap. Legitimation of a symbolic universe is the highest and most comprehensive level. It is this level of legitimation of the Jesus movement in Luke’s literature that this study addresses, in order to understand how Luke legitimates individual social institutions represented by specific purity boundary markers.

Legitimation becomes necessary when a symbolic universe becomes a problem. This can occur for many reasons, such as the need for a group to transmit its symbolic universe to the next generation, the members of which having no personal experience with or recollection of the events and realities upon which a society formed (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 93, 105).<sup>52</sup> Luke’s audience (Theophilus) represents a “next generation” of Jesus followers, disconnected experientially and historically from Jesus and his original group.

A symbolic universe also becomes problematic, thus requiring legitimation, when threatened by an alternative and competing symbolic universe (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 108). This latter is the very dynamic that existed between the symbolic universes of historical Yahweh worship and the Jesus movement, and it explains almost all of the conflict referenced and described throughout the Acts narrative (Neyrey 1991, 304).

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<sup>52</sup> “The problem of legitimation inevitably arises when the objectivations of the (now historic) institutional order are to be transmitted to a new generation. . . . The unity of history and biography is broken. In order to restore it, and thus to make intelligible both aspects of it, there must be ‘explanations’ and justifications of the salient elements of the institutional tradition. Legitimation is this process of ‘explaining’ and justifying” (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 93).

The distinct symbolic universe of the Jesus movement formed as the group distinguished itself within Judaism.<sup>53</sup> This emerging society's perception of reality was constituted on the traditional covenant-based purity system of Israel but evolved through modification and revision around the beliefs and experiences of the Jesus movement. This modified Israelite symbolic universe posed a threat to traditional Judaism. The essential cosmology and traditional institutional purity boundaries of historical Israelite religion were being redefined by members of the Jesus group, spawning conflict between the temple leadership, Palestinian Judaisms, and even *Diaspora* Judaisms and the Jesus movement. In addition, Israelite converts to the Jesus group who maintained traditional loyalty to the temple purity system resisted the purity remapping reflected in the emerging symbolic universe of the group (see for example, Acts 15:1–29; 21:17–26). These two sources of purity conflict, both with the mother body, but one engaging external forces and the other internal, motivated the legitimation of the group's symbolic universe presented by Luke-Acts. Throughout Acts, the narrative's focus alternates between the Jesus group's conflict with the Israelite religion, represented by the temple system (and temple loyalists throughout the *Diaspora*), and conflict within the Jesus group. The internal conflict arose between Jesus followers loyal to the Israelite purity system and those eager to transfer loyalty to the emerging new symbolic universe that was redrawing purity boundaries (some in direct violation of traditional Israelite boundaries). This chapter will trace the narrative development of Luke's legitimation formula that responds to these conflicts, toward the goal of locating the Ephesian disciple pericope within this legitimation formula. The conflict narratives illuminate the elemental differences in the competing versions of symbolic universes and constitute a key purpose for the composition of Luke-Acts.

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<sup>53</sup> Salevao (2002, 170–188) provides an excellent review and summary of much of the discussion about Christianity's emergence within and separation from Judaism.

### 1.3 The Temple in Luke's Conceptual Machinery

Because it functioned as the nexus of contact between deity (Yahweh) and humankind (specifically, God's covenant people, Israel), and because its patterns and practices replicated creation and the covenants, the Jerusalem temple represented the centre of the cosmos (*axis mundi*) within the Israelite worldview (Brawley 1987, 5, 127–130; Taylor 1999, 454; Esler 1987, 150). According to Neyrey (1991, 277),

“Be ye holy, as I am holy” became the norm which indicated how things in Israel's world should replicate and express the divine order established in God's initial, programmatic action of creation. This “holiness” came to be embodied especially in the central symbol of Israel's culture, the temple system, where specific maps, replicating the patterns of Genesis 1, regulated that focal symbol of the Jewish world, which was often thought to be the center of the universe.<sup>54</sup>

Our review of the Israelite purity map in the previous chapter points to the centrality of the temple in Israelite understanding of the cosmos and its effect on ordering all dimensions of Israelite life (deSilva 2000, 256–258; Green 1994, 507–510; Borg 1984, 54, 55; Eliade 1957, 20–22).<sup>55</sup> Any attempt to legitimate a distinct movement that was emerging as an alternative Judaism would necessarily be required to address the temple, its role in Israelite religion, and its role in and effect upon the symbolic universe of the new movement. Expressed differently, any movement emerging within the matrix of Israelite political religion could not divorce that emergence from the temple.<sup>56</sup> The temple's centrality to defining Israelites as a people group

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<sup>54</sup> Compare to Brawley (1987, 130): “The belief in a specific location for contact between heaven and earth so pervades antiquity, that it provides the vantage point for understanding the place of the temple and Jerusalem in Luke-Acts. Jerusalem stands at the center of salvation-history because it also stands at the central point of the contact between heaven and earth. Almost any of Luke's contemporaries would have seen beneath the symbolism of Jerusalem the presupposition that it marked the *axis mundi*.”

<sup>55</sup> Borg points out that the institutions of the temple and Torah were reinvigorated by and following the Maccabean revolt. Loyalty to God was measured by loyalty to these two institutions. Geertz (1983, 124) states that “at the political center of any complexly organized society there is . . . a set of symbolic forms expressing the fact that it is in truth governing. It is these . . . that mark the center as the center and give what goes on there its aura of being not merely important but in some odd fashion connected with the way the world is built.”

<sup>56</sup> Concerning the consensus that Christianity began within and grew out of Judaism, Dunn states: “It belongs to the essence of Christianity that it emerged from first century Judaism. Jesus was a Jew. The very first Christians were all Jews. Christianity began as a movement within Judaism, a messianic sect of Judaism” (1990,

and anchoring their subjective and objective reality must be accounted for in any legitimation of a movement group seeking to distinguish itself within (or eventually, from) traditional Judaism. Stated another way, if the Jesus movement is to be legitimated to its own in-group, the temple and what it represents in Israelite cosmology and the Israelite symbolic universe must be reconstituted in the Jesus group's symbolic universe. In fact, this is a central theme in Luke's conceptual machinery, both in the Gospel and in Acts. The first seven chapters of Acts comprise a literary section devoted to legitimating the Jesus group in direct contrast to the temple system, as addressed more fully below.<sup>57</sup>

In light of the key role of the temple in any discussion of symbolic universes and legitimation relative to Yahwism and the Jesus group, a beginning question must be, "How does Luke address the temple in his legitimation formula?" We expect the temple to play a prominent role throughout Luke's literature because of its prominence in all Judaisms, against which the Jesus movement must establish distinction and validity. Referring to intra-societal conflicts that generate legitimation efforts, Berger and Luckmann (1966, 109) state that "he who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing his definitions of reality." The role of the temple in Luke's legitimation formula represents one such "bigger stick." Berger (1967, 33) states that a legitimating function of all religion is to bestow upon in-group members an "ultimately valid ontological status, that is, by *locating* them within a sacred and cosmic frame

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638). Dunn (1991, 1) states elsewhere that "Christianity is a movement which emerged from within first-century Judaism. That simple, incontestable fact is crucial to our understanding of the beginnings of Christianity." See also, Salevao (2002, 173): "Indeed Christianity originated from within the matrix of Judaism, more specifically as a renewal movement within Judaism."

<sup>57</sup> John Elliott (1991, 211–240) provides an excellent and somewhat parallel discussion tracing Luke's intentional and thematic contrasts (and conflicts) between the temple and the household in Luke-Acts, illustrating the Jesus movements' (and thus, God's) selection of the household as the locus of authentic divine activity. Elliott's work recognizes several of the same features as this study but applies them in a different modality. Where this study traces Luke's conceptual machinery toward its cosmological arguments and implications, Elliott's focuses on the social practicalities and ramifications of Luke's Jesus movement and its co-option of the household as the fulfilment of and vehicle for God's salvation plan (in contrast to the temple's failure in these functions). The difference is primarily in the high level of abstraction this study explores in Luke's legitimation strategy. Validation of the household as the legitimate metaphorical reality of God's reign on earth.

of reference.” Berger is well worth quoting at more length here: “Probably the most ancient form of this legitimation is the conception of the institutional order as directly reflecting or manifesting the divine structure of the cosmos, that is, the conception of the relationship between society and cosmos as one between microcosm and macrocosm” (1967, 34). Douglas (1970, 158) confirms and illuminates this phenomenon from anthropological data by pointing out that legitimating a symbolic universe will likely include arguments and demonstrations founded in the cosmology behind that symbolic system. In fact, a group’s ritual rejection, such as that experienced by the Jesus movement from its mother body, triggers re-evaluation of the rejected group’s cosmology. Douglas writes,

Anyone who finds himself living in a new social condition must . . . find that the cosmology he used in his old habitat no longer works. We should try to think of cosmology as a set of categories that are in use. It is like lenses which bring into focus and make bearable the manifold challenge of experience. . . . Occasionally a major overhaul is necessary to bring the obsolete set of views into focus with new times and new company.

Luke’s perceived need to legitimize the Jesus movement indicates some kind of real or perceived rejection necessitating a cosmological reassessment.

#### 1.4 Tracing the Temple’s Legitimation Role in Luke’s Gospel Narrative

The temple and its supporting systems loom over the Lucan narrative like a large, imposing stage prop in an epic drama.<sup>58</sup> Chance (1988, 12) points out that Luke uses the term ἱερόν almost twice as often as Matthew and Mark combined. Commenting on the role of the temple in Luke-Acts, Brawley (1987, 118) states that the “prominence of the temple in Luke-Acts goes far beyond the actual number of references.” In addition to the frequency of temple occurrences, the prominence of the temple as a literary *inclusio* to Luke’s Gospel is significant to our legitimation reading of Luke-Acts. Luke’s Gospel narrative opens and closes with events

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<sup>58</sup> Esler (1987, 132) states: “The striking prominence of the Temple in Luke-Acts is, without a shadow of a doubt, a phenomenon which must be taken into account in attempting to understand Luke’s purpose and strategy. Yet this fact has not been entirely obvious to many scholars who have considered the matter.”

in and around the temple. However, these temple references that form bookends on the Gospel present contrasting views of the temple, which form keys to our analysis of Luke's conceptual machinery.<sup>59</sup> The following summary of Luke's narrative portrayal of the temple anticipates an understanding of why purity conflict and legitimation form Luke's fundamental motive and purpose and begins laying a foundation for the analysis of the narration of the Ephesian disciples encounter:

- Luke validates the temple as the legitimate abode of the potent presence in the first two chapters of his Gospel.
- He uses this legitimation of the temple as the nexus of human-divine contact to validate Jesus as a legitimate representative of Israelite religion and an intermediary between humankind and God.
- Luke's narrative then removes Jesus geographically from the temple and Jerusalem and, as the narrative brings him back to the temple, it is increasingly in an adversarial dynamic.
- Finally, the Gospel closes with the rending of the temple veil, an event that this study will argue signifies the divine presence vacating the temple (or at least no longer bounded within the temple).
- The Pentecost account in the first chapters of Acts narrates the relocation of the divine presence to the collectivity of the Jesus group. It is this relocation to the Jesus group

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<sup>59</sup> Many scholars note that Luke's Gospel begins and ends in the temple, but none have seen the legitimation significance to Luke's contrasting treatment of the temple. See especially, Green (1995, 4–6), who notes the initially positive portrayal of the temple and the subsequent increasingly negative characterization. He also acknowledges that Luke's use of the temple is specific to his narrative world construction. See also, Dawsey (1984, 158), who suggests a temple cleansing purpose to Luke's placement of temple scenes at the beginning and end of the Gospel. Additionally, Baltzer (1965, 271–272) notes Luke's "astonishingly positive" portrayal of the temple and suggests this supports Conzelmann's topographical approach to understanding Luke's composition. Koet (2006) observes the positive presentation of the temple in Luke 1–2 and the presupposed ritual purity for Zacharias, Anna, Simeon, and Jesus' parents, but fails to see the emerging pattern of Luke's treatment of the temple or its narrative significance in a legitimation formula. The literature is of little help here, however, because it fails to appreciate Luke's temple narratives as integral to a legitimation reading of Luke-Acts.



of the potent presence that provides the centre around which the Jesus movement's symbolic universe is formed and necessitates revised purity boundaries.

This summary focuses our expectations and frames the following review of Luke's conceptual development of the temple as a legitimating focus in his literature.

#### ***1.4.1 The Gospel's Opening Narrative***

Coleridge (1993) rightly emphasizes the importance of the narrator's choice of introductory elements and notes the "meagre critical attention" (28) granted the first episode of Luke's Gospel. He states that "this . . . makes the opening episode more . . . interesting and important for the critic in the reading" (29).<sup>60</sup> Luke was well aware of the Jesus group's relative estrangement from the temple cult at the time Luke-Acts was composed and yet still chose to open his narrative with a strong validation of the temple and the temple system. It is important to note that Luke's first two chapters of the Gospel portray the temple in a distinctly and exclusively positive light, signifying it is clearly the legitimate centre of the Israelite cosmos and locus of divine operation in the material realm. This portrayal is significant to our legitimization reading of Luke-Acts because it points to an initial validation of the temple in its role in Israelite cosmology and, thus, the Israelite symbolic universe. Since the Jesus movement's symbolic universe emerges as a revision of and is legitimated over and against that of Israelite religion, it is conceptually significant that Luke first demonstrates the legitimacy of Israelite cosmology and its purity map. He accomplishes this by narrating events in and around the temple that confirm it as the locus of the potent presence and the primary divine-human intersection within the cosmos, and he locates this narration at the very beginning of his legitimization document.

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<sup>60</sup> Coleridge (1993, 29, 30, 35–36) goes on to ascribe promise and fulfilment meaning to Luke's choice to open his narrative in the temple. Our reading of Luke-Acts instead looks for the legitimating purpose of placing the temple events at the front of the entire literary work.

This event is the foundation of Luke's legitimation formula, upon which he develops the conceptual machinery.

The first scene in the temple shows a personal encounter between a divine messenger and a human priest (Zacharias) who, significantly, was qualified according to covenant and custom to represent God's people to God in His presence (Luke 1:5, 6, 9).<sup>61</sup> Luke 1:10 strengthens the positive portrayal of the temple as the divine-human nexus of meeting by stating that "the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering."<sup>62</sup> This narrative event legitimates the temple because a qualified intermediary is miraculously contacted by God at the very centre of the Israelite cosmos, reinforcing its location in the Israelite symbolic universe. This is additionally significant because God's initiation of the Jesus movement can be traced to this point in the Israelite symbolic universe. The legitimacy of Jesus and the movement that would arise around him and his teaching is indicated by the facts that God himself is the initiator and the initiation occurred in the temple. In other words, that which God initiates and announces is valid *ipso facto* and, thus, superior to what may be initiated and announced by human agents. That God chose the temple and its cultic functions as acceptable contexts for the miraculous announcement demonstrates the validity of the temple and its cultic system. Luke is announcing that, according to God, the temple and its cult are legitimately defined by the Israelite symbolic universe. Because the temple is thus legitimated, the events integrated with its functions are legitimate.

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<sup>61</sup> Luke is careful to document Zacharias' qualifications for priestly duty (and includes his wife's priestly ancestry also): "They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord."

<sup>62</sup> It is noteworthy to Luke's legitimation purpose that the opening chapters of his Gospel contain no hint of any conflict related to the temple or the temple cult. Contrary to Coleridge (1993, 33, esp. note 3), this scene is not intended to transcend the temple cult but to validate the temple's function in Israelite cosmology. See below for a fuller discussion of cosmology as a dimension of Luke's legitimation scheme.

The next narrative temple scene is the presentation of Jesus for circumcision. Again, Luke is portraying the temple positively as the locus of God's presence and, by covenant, the centre of Israelite life vis-à-vis its existence and service to God's chosen people. Luke is careful to depict Jesus as legitimated by his parents' ceremonial fulfilment of covenant purity and sacrifice requirements (Luke 2:21–24, 39), practiced in direct contact with the Jerusalem temple, the centre of the Israelite purity map.

Two additional miracle events add effective weight to Luke's legitimization of the temple as the *axis mundi* of Israelite cosmology and the symbolic universe sponsored by that cosmology. The first of these narrative events presents a man, Simeon, as an intermediary for God, impelled by the Holy Spirit to come to the temple precincts. Simeon delivers an oracle about the status and role of Jesus (Luke 2:25–35). The other miracle event is the divinely inspired (implied) pronouncements by the prophetess, Anna, a person in constant connectedness to the temple. We are not provided content of her prophetic pronouncements, so we must conclude that Luke intends only that the fact of her connectedness to the temple and her authenticity as an intermediary of God should contribute to the legitimacy of the temple and Jesus.

In addition to miracle events, Luke includes narrative documentation that Jesus' kin group was loyal to the cultic traditions, which included an annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem at the time of the Feast of the Passover (Luke 2:41–49). Luke's legitimization of the temple is amplified by the readers' finding Jesus in the temple engaged in learning from the temple teachers. In addition to God's messengers, oracles, and Spirit presence, all validating the temple as God's abode and the legitimate intersection of human and divine, this story confirms the temple as the source of truth about God and His relationship to the creation. God's people could confidently

look to the temple as the authoritative source of truth. Jesus' reference to the temple as "My Father's *house*" (Luke 2:49) would not be lost on Luke's readers as the summation of this opening legitimization of the temple and its place in Israel's symbolic universe.<sup>63</sup> Legitimizing the temple's ultimate significance in the universe reflects Berger's description of cosmization of the institutions of a social world (1967, 37). By intimately associating Jesus with temple institutions, Luke allows Jesus to assume an ultimate sense of rightness in the roles he will play in society. Berger's quote in full helps us appreciate the significance of Luke's cosmic legitimization of the temple and Jesus:

Looked at from the viewpoint of individual subjective consciousness, the cosmization of the institutions permits the individual to have an ultimate sense of rightness . . . in the roles he is expected to play in society. . . . When roles, and the institutions to which they belong, are endowed with cosmic significance, the individual's self-identification with them attains a further dimension. . . . He *is* whatever society has identified him as by virtue of a cosmic truth, as it were, and his social being becomes rooted in the sacred reality of the universe. (1967, 37)

The absence in the opening temple narratives of any hint of conflict related to the temple or the temple cult is a key signal to Luke's legitimization intent, especially in light of the pervasive and intense conflict that will accompany almost every mention of the temple in the remaining text of Luke-Acts. This absence of conflict is as significant to Luke's legitimization formula as inclusion of miracle narration. A strong indication of Luke's intentional omission of conflict relative to the temple is in the account of the Baptist's ministry. The Gospels of both Mark and Matthew identify the crowds as coming from Jerusalem, (Matthew 3:5; Mark 1:5) with Matthew further identifying Sadducees among John's listeners (Matthew 3:7). John's scathing indictment of his listeners would thus reflect on Jerusalem, the temple cult, and the

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<sup>63</sup> The translation of ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου is somewhat disputed regarding exactly what it is of the Father's to which Jesus refers. The context argues for a reference to the temple, the Father's house, because it is the *location* of Jesus that is at issue with his parents. They were searching for him to locate him, not determine his activities. Jesus' response addresses the issue of his location, thus requiring we supply a physical location as the missing object of the preposition ἐν (See I. H Marshall 1978, 128). For supplying "house" as the probable object, note the parallels in 6:4 and 19:46.

Sanhedrin. By identifying John's listeners as simply ὄχλοι (Luke 3:7, 10), Luke sanitizes his account of any possible denigration of the temple or its cult. When specific groups are singled out in Luke's narrative for John's corrective preaching, they are groups that cannot be uniquely associated with Jerusalem or the temple, namely tax collectors and soldiers (Luke 3:12, 14). Luke's narrative temple, in the opening chapters of his Gospel, is absolutely disassociated from any negative assessments, either expressed or implied, direct or indirect. The only temple Luke allows his readers to see in this section of his literature is the legitimate centre of the cosmos, the holy House of God, the valid intersection of divinity and humanity.<sup>64</sup> This legitimacy is effectively transferred to Jesus, directly by oracle and indirectly by association and participation.<sup>65</sup>

#### ***1.4.2 Increasing Conflict with the Temple***

Luke's narrative removes Jesus to Galilee to begin his public ministry, far separated from the temple and Jerusalem. When the narrative brings Jesus back toward Jerusalem and eventually to the temple, it is with increasingly adversarial language and scenarios. The temple is not mentioned again until Luke 18:10, where Jesus simply refers to the temple as the place where two men went to pray. However, in Luke 19:45–47 (the next explicit temple reference), Jesus drives out the sellers and describes the temple as a robbers' den. Note the contrast of this portrayal of the temple with that in the first chapters of the Gospel. The temple and the temple cult, presented as the legitimate *axis mundi* in the opening chapters of the Gospel, are described

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<sup>64</sup> This does not imply that all humanity is identified with Israel. Israel's symbolic universe defined itself as exclusively qualified, by covenant and purity status, to contact holiness, the presence of Yahweh. Because of the exclusivity prescribed by Israel's self-understanding, if humanity was to contact holiness, it could only be through Israel and Israel's temple cult. This is why, from Israel's perspective, it is valid to state that Luke's temple portrayal is a portrait of the only valid intersection between God and humanity.

<sup>65</sup> Schuler (1998, 177–179) demonstrates Luke's employment in the first two Gospel chapters of the encomium rhetorical rules in pointing the reader to the superiority of Jesus over John as figures in the narrative. Although Jesus' legitimacy relative to the Baptist's is peripheral to this study, it shows Luke's interest in legitimation as a literary purpose.

in Luke 19 as corrupted by those entrusted with its oversight and operation. The corrupted temple leadership is now positioned in the literature as the primary adversary to Jesus and his followers. The final chapters of Luke's Gospel document the adversarial dynamics between Jesus and the temple leaders. Luke develops this conflict indirectly as the result of the Judean leaders' reaction to Jesus' purity remapping influence.<sup>66</sup> Luke also directly addresses Jesus' conflict with the temple by narrating the open and increasing tension that leads to Jesus' death. The temple leaders plot to destroy Jesus (19:47), contest his authority (20:1–2), react to his parabolic indictment (20:19), attempt to entrap him in capital violation (20:20), seek his death (22:2), conspire with Judas against Jesus (22:3–6), and finally succeed in arresting, trying, and executing Jesus (22:52–23:56).

This narration of the Jesus-temple conflict is integral to Luke's legitimation program because it demonstrates the inferiority of the temple cult in contrast to the superiority of Jesus' pure motives and valid role as God's intermediary. Another clue to Luke's legitimation intent is that he explicitly stages the temple leaders' confrontation of Jesus concerning his authority in front of the people (Luke 20:1–8), whereas Mark's version of the same event notes only that Jesus was walking in the temple (Mark 11:27).<sup>67</sup>

To summarize, Luke opens the Gospel by validating the temple (and thus, its place and function in the Israelite symbolic universe) as the locus of divine residence on earth, the active intersection between God and Israel. This legitimation of the Israelite symbolic universe includes

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<sup>66</sup> Neyrey (1991, 271–304) presents an excellent analysis of Luke's perspective on Jesus' purity remapping, defining Jesus and his followers as intent on redrawing purity boundaries, not demolishing them. Jesus' influence as a reformer drew strong reaction from observant Jews motivated to defend the existing purity map. Neyrey's contention is that conflicts over purity boundaries "account for most of the conflictual dynamics in Luke-Acts" (304). In other words, it is Jesus' attempts to reform the Israelite symbolic universe and the temple authorities' resistance to this reform that provides Neyrey's interpretive model for conflict passages in Luke-Acts.

<sup>67</sup> Dawsey (1984, 159) rightly notes that an official representation of the Sanhedrin is indicated here, and their intent was to invalidate Jesus' teaching. That the challenge fails and actually results in Jesus' parabolic defence of his authority to the people signals Luke's legitimation strategy—the legitimacy of Jesus' authority as an intermediary of God is demonstrated, and that over against the authority (and legitimacy) of the temple system.

validating Jesus and his intermediary representation of God. This intermediary representation of God eventually develops in Luke as a purity remapping (reform) initiative. Stated another way, Jesus brokers God's authority and power as a program to reform the worship and representation of Yahweh. But the temple system (especially its leaders) is increasingly portrayed as corrupt, failing in its custodial responsibilities toward God's holiness, the potent presence. The ultimate corruption is the leadership's adversarial position toward Jesus, a legitimate representative of God. The stark absence in the opening chapters of any hint of temple criticism or conflict is contrasted by the prevalence of criticism of and conflict involving the temple in the closing chapters. Through the narration of conflict, Luke clearly portrays the temple as inferior to Jesus and his followers, lending legitimation to Jesus' interpretation and revision of the Israelite symbolic universe. The waning legitimacy of the temple system against the rising legitimacy of the Jesus movement sets the stage for a major cosmological event, first signalled by the rending of the temple veil (Luke 23:45).

#### ***1.4.3 The Rending of the Veil***

The temple veil represented a physical boundary between humanity and the place most holy in the material cosmos, made so by the resident potent presence.<sup>68</sup> Human penetration of this boundary was severely restricted by precisely rigorous purity regulations. Only the high priest was qualified to penetrate this boundary, and then only once each year, so severe was the purity status of the space bounded by the veil (Esler 1987, 150). Luke's narration of the veil's destruction must be understood in view of the temple veil's status as a purity boundary for Luke's legitimation purpose to be apparent.

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<sup>68</sup> Whether the inner or outer veil is indicated is irrelevant to this discussion. See Beale (2004, 190–191) for a concise but adequate discussion of this issue. The significant issue to this study regarding the veil is its symbolic role as a boundary between God's presence and humanity and the symbolism resulting from its destruction.

It is our argument that the destroyed veil is the culmination of the de-legitimation of the temple as the *axis mundi*, the exclusive locus (from Israel's perspective) of divine-human interaction. Luke's narration presents the temple system as an increasingly inferior custodian of God's holiness vis-à-vis Jesus and his community. The destruction of the veil signals the dissolving of the boundary between God's presence and human contact, between the location of the potent presence in the temple and all other geography (Beale 2004, 190). It is Luke's intent that readers conclude that God initiates this event, a fact that removes legitimacy from the temple system, at least to some degree. We cannot state that God has vacated the temple—the text does not support such a conclusion.<sup>69</sup> We must, however, at least acknowledge a radical alteration in the symbolic universe anchored in the temple, which is no longer the bounded and exclusive “centre of the world” (Esler 1987, 150; Green 1994, 514).<sup>70</sup> This is not the same as saying the temple is not a legitimate location for God's people to interact with God (worship, prayer, etc.) (Sylva 1986, 249 note 25; Green 1994, 512).<sup>71</sup> It is to say that, at minimum, the

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<sup>69</sup> The Gospel narrative closes with the statement that Jesus' followers were “continually in the temple praising God” (Luke 24:53). This statement, together with the Jesus' groups temple activities (such as temple prayer) in the first chapters of Acts clearly indicate that Luke is not suggesting that the temple has been rejected by God or the Jesus group. This study argues that Luke's legitimation purpose is only demonstrating that the temple is no longer exclusive in its cosmological status as *axis mundi*. The issues germane to replacement theology are beyond the scope of this study. There is an abundance of literature (in fact, almost all of the Luke-Acts scholarship has dealt with this issue in one form or another) addressing the Jesus group's attitude toward the temple and whether the Jesus community is to be understood as a new temple, replacing the Jerusalem temple. Grappling with this and related theological issues is not relevant to this study.

<sup>70</sup> Green's (1994, 514) words are helpful here: “The torn veil works symbolically to neutralize the dominance of the temple as a sacred symbol of socio-religious power predetermining insider and outsider” and “Luke portrays the rending of the temple veil as symbolic of the destruction of the symbolic world surrounding and emanating from the temple, and not as symbolic of the destruction of the temple itself.” Contra Chance (1988, 122) who sees the rent veil as representing for Luke the destruction of the temple.

<sup>71</sup> But see also Baltzer (1965, 273) who argues that God did withdraw his presence from the temple and Jerusalem and bases this conclusion on Luke 13:35. Cf. Taylor (1999, 453–454).



torn veil introduces the possibility that God is initiating expanded contact with humans and the old cosmic order is no longer exclusive (Green 1994, 496, 511).<sup>72</sup>

The destruction of the purity boundary marking the earthly presence of God (holiness) sets the stage for Luke's construction of the Jesus movement's symbolic universe that emerges in Acts as the focus of Luke's legitimation program. The cosmic disturbances associated with Jesus' death, including the darkening of the sun and tearing of the temple curtain, indicate a God-initiated disruption in the cosmos (Beale 2004, 189).<sup>73</sup> That it is God himself initiating a reordering of the cosmos is a strong legitimation of Jesus' followers and indicates a need for at least a revised purity map. With the narration of the veil-rending at the end of his Gospel, Luke sets the stage for new boundaries to emerge, marking a new, or at least expanded, locus of holiness.<sup>74</sup> The historical purity boundaries, centred in the temple, are no longer adequate, or, as Acts demonstrates, completely relevant.

This legitimation reading of Luke-Acts suggests that the rending of the veil should be interpreted narratively as directly antecedent to the Pentecost event. Following the cosmic disturbances associated with the crucifixion, including the divinely initiated destruction of the purity boundary, the next significant manifestation of divinity (cosmic disturbance) is at Pentecost.

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<sup>72</sup> For a concise treatment of the Antiquity's symbolic association of the Jerusalem temple with the cosmos, see Beale 2004, pages 45–50. It is of no doubt that Luke's account of the veil's destruction signalled cosmic implications.

<sup>73</sup> For a discussion of recognition found in early literature of the cosmic portents surrounding the crucifixion, see de Jonge (1985).

<sup>74</sup> It would probably not be lost on Luke's readers that the veil itself was adorned with a graphic depiction of the cosmos—sun, moon and stars.

### 1.5 The Temple in Acts

In contrast to the opening of his Gospel, Luke does not mention the temple until the end of the second chapter, and then only tangentially to the plot and subsequent to the Pentecost event. The temple's role in at least the first seven chapters of Acts represents something akin to a literary prop, against which Luke develops and illustrates the legitimacy of the emerging Jesus movement. Said another way, Luke juxtaposes the emerging Jesus movement and the temple, showing the vacancy of the temple system as a residence of holiness next to the vibrancy of the potent presence among Jesus' followers. Through the narrative juxtaposition of the temple and the Jesus group, Luke demonstrates the relocation of God's presence from the temple to the Jesus group. Repeated conflict and contrast between the temple and Jesus' followers reinforces for the reader Luke's intended effect—God has initiated modifications in the cosmos that resulted in the relocation of the potent presence from the temple to the Jesus group. Given the significance of the temple to all first-century Judaism, even *Diaspora* Judaism to at least an historical dimension, the effect of Luke's legitimization of the Jesus movement in juxtaposition to the temple would be profound for all first-century Mediterranean audiences.

This divinely re-engineered cosmos reality provides for Luke's construction of a new symbolic universe, and necessitates a revised purity map to accommodate the Jesus group's responsibilities as custodians of holiness. The redrawing of the purity map is violently resisted by the temple leadership and persistently resisted from within the Jesus group by loyalists to the temple. These are the very conflict phenomena that necessitated legitimization of the emerging Jesus movement with the construction of a new symbolic universe. It is this conflict milieu that forms the context for the Ephesian disciples encounter recorded later in the Acts narrative.

### 1.6 Pentecost's Role in Luke's Legitimation Formula

Understanding the legitimation role of the Pentecost narrative in Acts must begin with the rending of the temple veil in Luke's gospel. Luke's Pentecost account in Acts tells of the potent presence's invasion of the collectivity of Jesus' followers. The rent veil represents the removal of the historical purity boundary demarcating God's manifest presence among humanity. This boundary removal prepares Luke's readers to appreciate the significance of the manifestation of God's presence among the followers of Jesus. Just as Luke portrays the veil-rending as God-initiated and -executed, so also is the Jesus group's invasion by the potent presence at Pentecost. Luke's group of Jesus followers is the passive target of God's activity. Luke's narration of Pentecost is consistent with Brawley's first two categories of legitimating techniques: divine approval and access to divine power. It is patently logical that divine approval is assumed for what divinity itself is performing. Further strengthening the legitimating effect of Luke's Pentecost narrative are the direct parallels to Israel's historical theophanies (see Beale 2004, 205–208; Johnson 1992, 45–47). Luke ensures that his readers infer this connection by employing analogies that clearly point directly to these parallels: sound like *wind* and tongues seemingly of *fire*. Lincoln's (1985, 205) succinct summary of these parallels is helpful:<sup>75</sup>

Luke wants to make clear that this coming of the Spirit was a divine act. He does this through the language and phenomena of a theophany in [Acts] 2:2. The noise comes from heaven, i.e., from God, and both the wind and fire are the accompaniments of a theophany. Wind is mentioned in 2 Samuel 22:11, 16; Job 37:9, 10; Ezekiel 13:13. Fire is a common feature in theophanies and is an integral element of the theophany at Sinai – Exodus 19:18. Though the Exodus account does not mention wind as well at Sinai, other versions do, such as Josephus, *Ant.* 3.80. Philo, *De Decal.* 33 mentions the noise created by God's *pneuma*, breath or wind. Luke understandably uses the term *pnoē* for wind, instead of *pneuma*, which he uses for the Spirit himself, and in the only other place he uses *pnoē* (Acts 17:25) it means the creative breath of God. . . . it is clearly miraculous, direct, unmediated, divine.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. Schott (1996, 406), Krodel (1984,99), Jarvis (1992, 240)

<sup>76</sup> Fire functioned in both Israelite and non-Israelite sacrifices as a purifying and consuming energy force (TDNT, 6:931-947). The signification of the fire resting on individuals would not have been lost on Luke's

It is noteworthy in light of our pursuit of Luke's legitimating conceptual machinery that many examples exist of pagan Hellenistic literature paralleling references in the Acts' Pentecost narrative. These examples undergird the conclusion that Luke is demonstrating the divine presence among the Jesus group with language that resonates with and convinces both his narrative audience and his readers. These examples are all drawn from Van der Horst (1985).<sup>77</sup>

Wind and fire frequently appear in Hellenistic literature as evidence of divine presence, especially fire on the head (49–50). Notable examples are Homer, *Iliad* 18.225–227; Euripides, *Bacchae* 757–758; Cicero, *De divinatione* 1.53.121; Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.680–684; and Plutarch, *Caesar* 63.2. Divinely inspired speech is also frequent in this literature (50–51). A few examples are Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 40, 432D–E; Justinus, *Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum Pompei Trogi* 43.1.8; and Cicero, *De divinatione* 1.6.12.

Of additional interest is the established connection in Israelite history and perception of Pentecost to the commemoration of the law-giving at Sinai. It is a matter of speculation how much this Israelite perception would have resonated with Luke's readers, so a full discussion is not included here. If this connection was explicit between Luke and his readers (as Fitzmyer (1984, 432–433) and Johnson (199, 48) argue well), Luke lends additional weight to his conceptual machinery. The coming of the Holy Spirit among the Jesus group with prophetic pronouncements

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readers, Jews and Gentiles, as purification for the imminent contact with holiness.

<sup>77</sup> As noted previously, many background questions are not germane to this study. However, many of the issues addressed in this study may be relevant to these background questions. For example, the question of Luke's audience may be informed by consideration of the prevalence of non-Israelite language and images used in legitimating the Jesus group, such as mentioned here. Was Luke as intent on drawing from images that resonated with his Gentile readers as he was with applying Israelite history?

being analogous to the giving of the law—both with similar cosmic disturbances—would forge an immediate legitimacy in those who comprehended the association.<sup>78</sup>

It is noteworthy, even highly significant, that Luke avoids locating the Jesus group geographically during the Pentecost event. This will be addressed again below, but the omission of location represents two elements in Luke's conceptual machinery: God's presence is not to be associated with geography or physical structure, and certainly not to be restricted to a temple location. The intentionality of this glaring omission is confirmed by Stephen's speech, as discussed below.

Luke devotes the first seven chapters of Acts to demonstrating the validity of the Jesus group's post-Pentecost status as locus of the potent presence. This demonstration is executed by developing several key themes in the narrative's plot: the divine initiative in de-legitimizing the temple as the *axis mundi* and relocating to the Jesus group (veil-rending and Pentecost); the relatively stark emptiness of the temple (in terms of divine action and dynamic goodness) and the moral and spiritual impotence of its administration; the occurrence of miracle events related to the Jesus group; and, the response of the Israelite population. Pentecost is the conceptual cornerstone of Luke's legitimation of the Jesus group and the event upon which the group's symbolic universe is founded and which necessitates a new purity map. Pentecost is Luke's narration of a divinely initiated and executed cosmic reordering, namely, God's presence manifesting its new locus among the Jesus group. This formula works because of the narrative foundation laid by Luke using the legitimation and de-legitimation of the temple in his Gospel. God is justified in modifying the cosmos because of the inferiority of the status quo.

Concurrent with and subsequent to Pentecost are additional extraordinary events that mirror divine acts from Israel's history, such as miraculous sights, sounds, prophecy and

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<sup>78</sup> For further discussion, see Lincoln (1985), Johnson (1992), Fitzmyer (1984, 432–434), Giles (1983, 137–139), and VanderKam (2002).

the Ananias and Sapphira event. This seven-chapter section closes with Stephen's speech interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures as legitimating the divorce of God's presence (holiness) from geographical restriction (cf. DeSilva 2000, 292–293). Stephen's speech, as with Peter's Pentecost speech, is an example of legitimation through reinterpretation of a group's history. The right and ability to interpret a social world's history is integral to effectively constructing, and confirming the validity of, its symbolic universe (Watson 1986, 40).<sup>79</sup> The interpretation of Israel's covenant history by Jesus group leaders is integral to Luke's legitimating formula and reflective of both Watson's third legitimating technique and Brawley's sixth category (see above). Neyrey (1991) identifies the new reading and interpretation of Scripture by the Acts characters as key to drawing new purity maps. However, he describes this as merely a "hermeneutical perspective that formed the basis for Luke's new maps" (295). He fails to correctly identify Luke's treatment of Israel's Scriptures as a key technique in his legitimation formula.

### ***1.6.1 The Holy Spirit***

Important to our legitimation reading of Luke's writing is an understanding of and appreciation for the role in Acts of the Holy Spirit toward the validity of the Jesus group. Demonstrating that God is personally active among the Jesus group is the foundation upon which Luke's legitimation formula is built. This concept is key to the legitimacy of the Jesus movement and represents the substance of the purity conflict that propels the need for legitimation. The intramural purity conflict results directly from the fact that holiness is resident with the developing society of Jesus followers, thus constituting its responsibilities as a custodian of holiness.

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<sup>79</sup> Watson (1986, 40), in articulating models for the analysis of reform movements and their transformation into sects, states that reinterpretation of a movement's traditions is vital to an emerging sect's "ideology legitimating its separation from a society," and "the traditions must therefore be reinterpreted to apply exclusively to the sect." This is not to suggest Luke is legitimating the Jesus group's separation from the greater Israelite society, but to reinforce Luke's inclusion of Stephen's speech as a common, even necessary, legitimating element within his conceptual machinery.

A broad range of scholarship addresses the topic of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts. Most of this literature is only minimally relevant to this study, for two primary reasons: (1) none of the existing literature examines the role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts for its social significance; and, (2) the legitimation purpose of the Holy Spirit's role in Luke-Acts is not contingent on understanding theological propositions or narrative critical analyses. Whether Luke's Holy Spirit is a "What" (Lampe 1955; Schweizer 1964), a "Who" (Bruce 1973; Hull 1967), or something in between (Bultmann 1951; Cadbury 1927; Fitzmyer 1981), and how Luke's narrative role for the Holy Spirit is developed and defined (Shepherd 1994; Darr 1992; Brawley 1990), and other matters of comparative pneumatologies, are all issues outside the scope and relevancy of this study. Significant to our analysis is simply the fact that in Luke's construction of the Jesus group's symbolic universe, the Holy Spirit is God's manifest participation within the human social experience of the Jesus community. Fitzmyer (1998, 196) states that "Luke takes over the portrayal of the Spirit from the OT: a way of expressing God's presence to human beings or to the world . . . ." Brawley, in discussing four reasons that God is acting "on stage" in the Lucan narrative, makes the statement that "'Holy Spirit' and 'God' appear interchangeably" (Brawley 1998, 281).<sup>80</sup>

Although many theological inferences can be drawn from the narrative relationship between God and the Holy Spirit, key to our legitimation reading of Luke-Acts is that the Holy Spirit is God, active and present. The legitimation implication of the Holy Spirit's intrusion into the Jesus group is understood against the backdrop of cosmology summarized in the first chapter.<sup>81</sup> It is this Pentecost event that, more than any other single event, signals Luke's

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<sup>80</sup> Brawley (1998, 280–281) challenges Shepherd's characterization of the Holy Spirit in Luke's narrative. Shepherd argues that the Holy Spirit is the on-stage presence representing the off-stage God. Brawley's contention is that Luke uses the Holy Spirit as the on-stage God, participating in the narrative.

<sup>81</sup> Especially the worldview of Judaism, but Luke seems to take special care to appeal to a more common cosmology in executing his legitimation formula.

intent to construct an alternate symbolic universe to that of historical Israel's. In the rending of the veil, Luke signals the de-legitimation of the temple as the bounded residence of holiness. But it is not until Pentecost that Luke narrates the consequence of that de-legitimation. The Jesus group becomes a residence of the potent presence and, therefore, *de facto* custodians of holiness. The Jesus group's sense of custodial responsibility of holiness was grounded in and nurtured by Israel's history as a covenant people, as demonstrated by Luke in the narrative following Acts 7.

Luke's Israelite readers would immediately resonate with this covenant history and transfer validity to the Jesus movement based on the presence of the Holy Spirit. But Gentiles would have also responded to this concept, even without covenant familiarity. DeSilva (2000, 250–253) describes Greek society's distinctions between sacred and common space. Sacred space was highly restricted, enforced by fear of a divinity's retribution upon the unauthorized person who encroached. Luke's conceptual machinery, then, was not restricted to the Israelite insider steeped in covenant history. Rather, Luke appealed to more a general cosmology of his world, including demonstrating that the Holy Spirit was present and active.<sup>82</sup>

Demonstrating the Jesus group's legitimate status as a residence of holiness is foundational to Luke's legitimation formula. The first seven chapters of Acts are devoted to the conceptual machinery that will confirm this legitimacy and provide subsequent generations (represented by Theophilus) with the narrative tools to protect and perpetuate the group's interests. The locus of God's presence and activity, previously fixed historically in the temple's bounded holy place (cf. Judaism's symbolic universe outlined in the previous chapter), relocates to the community of those who follow Jesus. As Neyrey (1991, 293) states, "Jesus as the

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<sup>82</sup> Again related to audience identification, it is interesting to consider Luke's utility of universal cosmology within his conceptual machinery. Reinterpreting Israel's history as uniquely applying to the Jesus movement was clearly part of Luke's formula, but not so overtly that his non-Israelite readers would be disenfranchised from his legitimating arguments.



cornerstone of the true temple becomes the *new* center of the map and all holiness is measured in proximity to him.”

The following paragraphs will trace Luke’s demonstration of the potent presence, represented by the Holy Spirit, among the Jesus group. This discussion provides the context for analyzing the social significance of glossolalia in Acts and a social understanding of the Ephesian disciples encounter vis-à-vis their interaction with the Holy Spirit. The Ephesian disciples’ receiving of the Holy Spirit is integral to Paul’s initial queries of them. Understanding the significance of Luke’s use of the Holy Spirit in his legitimation formula will provide important clues to this narrative event at Ephesus. The remainder of this chapter will trace Luke’s conceptual machinery in Acts toward establishing the narrative social background and context through which to analyse glossolalia and the Ephesian disciples pericope. We will approach this task by organizing the survey discussion into the narrative themes presented below:

- 1) Narrative demonstration of divine initiative/approval, both directly within miracle narratives and indirectly through speeches that reinterpret Israel’s sacred history
- 2) Contrasts and conflicts illustrating the inferiority of the temple system vis-à-vis the Jesus group as residence of the potent presence
- 3) Miracle events as legitimating components of Luke’s formula

These themes represent the essence of Luke’s conceptual machinery, by which he constructs the symbolic universe for the Jesus group, legitimating this social world. It follows that these themes will reflect the legitimating model and its various techniques as discussed above in this chapter. By way of preview, these legitimating techniques associate with the narrative themes as follows:

- 1) The narrative demonstration of divine initiative/approval accomplishes Watson’s third legitimating technique, Brawley’s first, second, and sixth, and Berger’s

proposal that legitimation is most effective when it hides the constructed nature of the social order.

- 2) Illustrating the inferiority of the temple system reflects Watson's suggestion that denunciation of opponents and antithesis are two effective legitimation techniques. This theme also goes directly to the heart of legitimation, as stated by Berger and Luckmann (1966, 108): "The alternative universe presented by the other society [in this case the mother body, Israelite religion] must be met with the best possible reasons for the superiority of one's own [Jesus community]. This necessity requires a conceptual machinery of considerable sophistication."
- 3) Luke's miracle narratives effect legitimation reflective of Brawley's first, second, and sixth techniques, as well as Watson's third.

### 1.7 Tracing Luke's Conceptual Machinery's Legitimizing Themes in Acts 1–7

#### ***1.7.1 Divine Initiative/Approval***

As Berger noted (1967, 33), social worlds (in our case, the community comprised of Jesus followers) are more effectively legitimated if they are convincingly located within a sacred and cosmic frame of reference. This helps conceal their constructed nature, elevating their status above much of the attacks that would be mounted against humanly-contrived social phenomena. As Berger later restates this legitimation principle, through religious legitimations, the "humanly constructed nomoi are given a cosmic status" (1967, 36).

The Acts narrative fits this religious legitimation model precisely. Luke narrates many events so as not only to locate them within a sacred and cosmic frame of reference, but also to attribute their cause directly to God himself. The Jesus followers' social existence is assured, not only having divine approval, but because its existence was by divine constitution. Divine causation qualifies decisively as another of Berger and Luckmann's "bigger sticks."

But narrating demonstrations of divine cause produces a dilemma for Luke due to the Jesus groups' struggle for validity within, and increasingly over and against, traditional Israelite religion. The history of Israel, as recorded in its Scriptures and traditions, explains God's actions in constituting His people through covenant initiatives and law codes. Israel's symbolic universe, with its concretization in the temple-centred purity map, unequivocally defines God, His purposes and plans, and His modes and means of interacting with His creation. Luke's legitimization of the Jesus group by demonstrating divine cause produces incongruities with historical Judaism. How did Luke resolve the conceptual dissonance generated by changes in Yahweh's nexus and mode of interaction with creation? He addresses the perceived dissonance with Israel's history by locating speech events at key points in the narrative.

Peter's Pentecost speech validates Pentecost's cosmic events (and thus the group through which they manifest) as divinely initiated by casting them as the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy. The interpretation of history as applied to the emerging society is a key legitimating technique. The narrative not only references the prophet Joel, noting his prediction of divine activity that Luke attaches to Pentecost, but also references David. After stating that God himself legitimated Jesus with miracles, wonders, and signs (Acts 2:22), Luke assigns the fulfilment of David's messianic writings to Jesus, the founder of the community now constituting a divine residence.<sup>83</sup> The explanation of Pentecost as reinterpretation of Israel's traditions and history is effective legitimation.

Divine initiative/approval is demonstrated through the Pentecost narrative in these primary components:

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<sup>83</sup> Johnson (1992, 54–55), while not promoting the legitimation value of Peter's speech, reviews Luke's sophisticated rhetorical construction in this speech, effectively reinterpreting Israel's Scriptures as uniquely applying to the recipients of Pentecost's cosmic convulsions.

- The events themselves are recorded as originating in heaven, being accompanied by miraculous phenomena, and culminating with God's Spirit filling the group, which enabled them to declare in other languages the wonders of God.
- The events and the community's founder (Jesus) are assigned historical significance and validity via Peter's speech. This technique effectively co-opts Israel's history as a legitimating source of authority for the Jesus group.
- A newly constructed nomos administered by Peter, "repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38), are firmly couched in the speech's cosmic and historical context. Repentance and baptism are thus not viewed by Peter's hearers as humanly contrived laws, but divinely instituted and appropriate to the new order. In other words, these nomoi of the new group occupy a cosmic status.
- The response of the people lends to the legitimating effect. Luke states that the hearers were troubled in their hearts and sought instructions for joining the group (Acts 2:37). This recorded response of conviction in the immediate audience lends to the validity of the events and Peter's representation of them as valid results of Israel's history. The reference to three thousand converts is remarkable and an overt indication of Luke's legitimization purpose. Luke further records that the group was "enjoying the favour of all the people" and God was increasing their number daily.

All of these legitimating techniques contribute to locating the Jesus group in a cosmic and sacred frame of reference, namely, the sacred covenant history of Israel.

Luke's narrative further develops the legitimating theme of divine initiative/approval by recording the healing miracle at the gate called Beautiful (Acts 3:1–21). This event demonstrates the Jesus group's leaders' access to divine power. Again, the narration includes

a speech by Peter explaining the divine cause of the miracle and couching it in Israel's history by referencing the patriarchs. The legitimating effect of the miracle narrative is increased by Luke's references again to a positive response from a large audience. Another two thousand converts were persuaded of the validity of the Jesus group, its message, and its divine approval. Brawley's fourth category (the group's benefit to others) is represented in both the miracle accounts and the speech contents. Not only are the immediate benefits of healing available via the group's access to divine power, but God's salvation is available via the group's message and its role as brokers of God's favour. Other general references to miracles (Acts 2:43; 5:12, 16; 6:8) confirm the legitimating effect of the group's access to divine power, indicating that the healing at the gate Beautiful was not a one-time exception. The followers of Jesus were to be known as a society having access to divine power and enjoying divine favour.

### ***1.7.2 The Use of Antitheses as a Legitimizing Technique***

As stated above, the Acts narrative juxtaposes the temple and the Jesus group for the purpose of contrast. The Jesus group emerges in several ways in the narrative as the antithesis of the temple system, the increasing inferiority of the latter being demonstrated by Luke. In using this component of Watson's legitimation model, it is helpful to review his description of *antithesis* as a legitimating technique.<sup>84</sup> Watson (1986, 40) states that the "gulf which is perceived between the sect and society may be crystallized in antitheses. These antitheses take the form of a contrast between the two groups: the righteous and the unrighteous; the holy and the unholy; the godly

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<sup>84</sup> Watson (1986, 38–41) precedes this presentation of a three-part legitimation model with a discussion of the distinction between a reform movement and a sect. He states that this distinction is fluid, one of gradation. He further states that a reform movement, such as initiated by Jesus and His followers, becomes a sect as the old religion rejects it and its reforming activities. As described by Watson (39), the early Jesus followers represented a reform movement, even long after Jesus' death. It is our position in this study that Luke-Acts represents a point somewhere on this continuum between reform movement and sect. Luke clearly intends to portray the Jesus group as non-sectarian in motive. However, his recorded rejection by the temple system at least sets the stage for the legitimation of a sect, even if this is not his intent.

and the ungodly; and so on.”<sup>85</sup> The following review of the major elements of contrast between the temple system and the Jesus group illustrates Luke’s success in implementing Watson’s first two legitimating techniques in his narrative construction.

### **1.7.2.1 God’s Presence: Temple versus Jesus Group**

The events of Pentecost in the narrative have no physical connection to the temple structure or cultic system. In light of Luke’s care to locate other specific events—such as the healing at the gate called Beautiful, the meeting in the temple courts, Peter’s speech in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade—it is significant that he does not locate the Pentecost events. We must conclude that this curious lack of location is intentional and related to his legitimization formula. Attempts to locate the events geographically are misguided by a failure to apprehend Luke’s intentional concealment of this data.<sup>86</sup> Luke clearly does not indicate a rejection of the temple at this point in his narrative. The Jesus group will not be subject to the accusation they abandoned the very historical identity of Israel. Should schism occur between the temple leadership and the Jesus group, it will be the result of Israelite rejection of the Jesus group as a legitimate Judaism, not Jesus’ followers’ rejection of the temple. It is our argument that Stephen’s speech confirms Luke’s intentional omission of a physical location for the Pentecost events.

Stephen’s speech (Acts 7:2–53) should be considered the culminating element of Luke’s opening foundational legitimization of the Jesus group as a divine residence independent

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<sup>85</sup> “The complexities of moral judgments that typify a complex society are resolved into a series of binary oppositions: poor–rich, good–evil, pious–hypocrite, elect–damned” (Gager, *Kingdom*, 25).

<sup>86</sup> Horton (2001, 54) attempts to identify an upper room location in the temple area, reviewing arguments for and against such a location. We are saying here that these attempts are pointless in light of Luke’s intent to conceal the location for the purpose of divorcing holiness from geography, specifically the temple. Others who address the question of where the Pentecost event occurred include Fitzmyer (1998, 238), Munck (1967, 14), Marshall (1980, 68), and Arrington (1999, 542).

of the temple system.<sup>87</sup> Identifying the legitimation purpose and structure of this speech event produces the best understanding of its meaning and its broader role in the Acts narrative.<sup>88</sup> This speech forms the narrative capstone to the first seven chapters, in which the Jesus movement and the temple are contrasted for relative validity regarding compatibility with holiness and God's approval.<sup>89</sup> Luke introduces the speech event with charges against Stephen that are produced by false witnesses against the man who did miracles and spoke with the Holy Spirit's assistance. The contrast is explicitly established from the beginning of this speech passage. The charges themselves frame the legitimation conflict between competing symbolic universes, and they point directly to the narrative purpose for which Luke has kept the Jesus group in close literary juxtaposition with the temple. Stephen is charged with "speaking against this holy place and against the law. . . . [saying] that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us" (Acts 6:13–14).<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Stephen's speech is a passage used often to argue both for and against positions in replacement theology. I am convinced that Luke did not intend to promote replacement of the temple, but did use the temple and its legitimated historical status as the *axis mundi* against which to legitimate the Jesus group. Because conflict and contrast are necessary to effective legitimation, and demonstrating the inadequacy of the temple leads to this purpose, the appearance of replacement theology can easily be forced onto the text. This is a misunderstanding of Luke-Acts based on failure to apprehend the legitimation purpose of the literature. See Weinert (1987), Sylva (1987), and Larsson (1993) for succinct and concise treatments of Stephen's speech relative to replacement theories. Sylva (262, 265–275) argues that Stephen's thesis is the transcendence of God's presence over the temple. This position is most consistent with and complementary to ours in this study. Contra Larsson's view that the temple is superseded by the coming of Jesus, we do not see this as Luke's purpose.

<sup>88</sup> This failure to appreciate Luke's legitimation programme has produced such comments as those by Dibelius (1956, 167–169) as referenced in Sweeney (2002, 187–188), who suggests that Acts 7:2–34 is irrelevant, having no purpose whatever.

<sup>89</sup> This opinion that Stephen's speech is Luke's narrative capstone to the legitimating purpose of the first major section of Acts is furthered by the absence of any Gospel *kerygma* as is evident in Peter's previous speeches. In other words, Luke is using Stephen's speech for a purpose other than to articulate the teachings of Jesus (the gospel) or as an apology for his messiahship (Dunn 1991, 64). Simon (1951, 141) notes this absence of a Christian message and suggests Stephen focuses the speech's christology on the typological Moses figure.

<sup>90</sup> Larsson (1993) senses the legitimating purpose of Stephen's speech in his statement that Stephen's speech is "Luke's way of depicting the fundamental difference between (unbelieving) Judaism and Christianity. In this sense it could be seen as an apology . . . for the church" (384).

In responding to these charges, this speech reviews the nomadic history of Israel, taking care to note God's miraculous presence and activities accompanying the people group, rather than associating with a geographical restriction. Stephen's review traces Israelite history to the construction of Solomon's temple and then declares that living in a physical structure was not God's choice (Acts 7:48–50). Stephen is not rejecting the Aaronic cult worship *per se*, as seen in his glorification of the tabernacle worship. His opposition was “against the localization of worship” (Donaldson 1981, 31). The history of Israel was marked by disobedience and failure, including the major misunderstanding that the potent presence was restricted by geography and physical boundaries.<sup>91</sup> Stephen's final charge, following his interpretation of Israel's history that effectively divorces God's presence from geographic specificity, includes the allegation that the temple leaders always resist even the Holy Spirit. This is a clear articulation of Luke's use of both denunciation of adversaries and antithesis in his conceptual machinery.

The concept of God's relocated presence among the Jesus group is first narrated as event and experience and subsequently explained and validated in speech. This validating speech includes applying traditions from Israel's history more authentically to the Jesus group via the interpretation of Israel's history. Weinert (1987, 90) states that the climax of Stephen's speech “casts it as a defence of the true meaning of the prophets, the Law, and under the aspect of revelation, the Temple as well.” Luke's conceptual machinery for legitimating the Jesus group via construction of its symbolic universe is clearly evident.

The execution of Stephen signals to Luke's readers the Sanhedrin's inferior rank as interpreters of Israel's traditions and its Scriptures. As described by Pilch (2008, 16), resorting

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<sup>91</sup> In characterizing Stephen's speech within a discussion considering its possible Samaritan source, Donaldson (1981, 33) states that Stephen's speech is in “opposition to any form of localized centre of worship.”



to violence to culminate a public confrontation is a clear admission of defeat.<sup>92</sup> The adversary who cannot be bested in logic, evidence, or nobility must be diminished or eliminated through physical violence. Thus Luke tacitly confirms Stephen's superior argument that left the Sanhedrin without adequate evidential or logical defence.

### 1.7.2.2 Legitimizing Contrasts

Luke purposely locates the Jesus group in Jerusalem in and around the temple for the first seven chapters of his narrative. This literary juxtaposition of the temple system and the Jesus movement provides opportunity to demonstrate the superiority of the Jesus group in direct interaction with the temple. In addition to Stephen's speech, several contrasts are illustrated by Luke. These contrasts effect two primary legitimating techniques: the denouncement of opponents and antitheses.

The first contrast effecting denouncement and antithesis is the opposition by the Sanhedrin to the healing of the lame man at the gate called Beautiful. Key elements to this episode as narrated for Luke's legitimation purpose are as follows:

- Peter and John are on their way to the temple. Luke's narration brings the event into immediate proximity with the temple system.
- The helpless crippled man expects material aid but is instead "saved" by Peter and John's access to divine power and favour. The contrast here is acute in that Luke notes that this man was placed at this temple gate every day, implying that there had been no temple-mediated divine intervention (not to mention material aid).
- The apostles and the healed man then enter the temple courts praising God, but not because of something they experienced via the temple system. Luke structures

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<sup>92</sup> On resorting to violence as an admission of defeat in public challenge-riposte, see also Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998, 191–192).

the account carefully to emphasize that the divine saving power came from God, mediated through Peter and John (Acts 3:4, 6, 12, 13), not the temple cult.

- The apostles' speech response to the arrest includes explicit reference to an act of kindness (Acts 4:9).

Brawley lists benefiting others as his fourth category of legitimating techniques. The simple act of opposing the miracle suggests the inferior motivation of the temple leaders. It was the desire of the Sanhedrin to punish the apostles (Acts 4:21), illustrating for Luke's readers the authentic superiority of the apostles' motives to that of the temple leaders. Where one (the Jesus followers) sought to benefit the people by brokering God's power among them, the Sanhedrin sought to control and prohibit, disregarding the people's interests. The universe constructed by Luke exhibited benevolence toward the people, contrasted with the temple system's universe of traditional and institutionalized disregard for the population's well-being.

The second direct contrast is presented in the account of the apostle's arrest, motivated by the Sadducean leaders' jealousy (Acts 5:17–41). This pericope exhibits several legitimating devices, including God's favour for the Jesus group in the face of explicit disapproval of the Sadducean's treatment of the apostles. God's favour is demonstrated when God dispatches an angel from heaven to counteract the Sadducean's incarceration of the apostles. That God himself intervened to reverse this action represents the highest validation of the Jesus' group's activities, including their perspective of reality. The message delivered by God's angel directed them to propagate their understanding of cosmic reality and to do so at the centre of the Israelite universe. Luke invokes here the most effective legitimation tool available: God's direct and explicit approval of the Jesus society's view of reality. Luke informs the reader that the contrast revealed by the conflict between the Israelite symbolic universe and the emerging Jesus group's symbolic universe is being staged by divine command. The temple leadership is painted as

opposing God himself with ignoble motives. If the account of the event itself was not enough, Luke has Gamaliel stating the essential legitimating point of the pericope: “But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; *you will only find yourselves fighting against God*” (emphasis added) (Acts 5:39).

Thirdly, it must be noted that, as the Jesus group continues in the temple areas, even observing temple traditions, Luke is careful to attribute divine power as originating only through them. Miracles are an integral component of Luke’s legitimating formula. The conceptual machinery we are tracing utilizes miracles described by Reimer (2002, 90), who states, “The narrative of Acts explicitly and implicitly suggests that miracles are the sign that intermediaries are legitimately connected to a divine power source.”<sup>93</sup> Reimer goes on to reiterate that the primary function of miracles in the Acts narrative is as a validating tool (94).<sup>94</sup>

By juxtaposing the two symbolic universes, Luke effectively demonstrates that it is the Jesus group who enjoys the presence of God. The miracles, the angelic visits, the interaction with God’s Spirit, are all associated exclusively with the Jesus group. Not only does the temple system sponsor no divine activity, its leaders actually oppose God’s actions through the Jesus group and inflict persecution on its leaders. Compare this to Luke’s opening narrative in his Gospel, where the system itself was the vehicle for God’s manifest interaction with Israel (and the world through Israel). In that part of the literature, the temple system included several devout participants who were qualified for compatibility with holiness, and access to divine power, and were the recipients of divine approval.

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<sup>93</sup> Also observed by Schreiber (1996, 147), who states that miracles in Acts fulfil “eine gewisse Beglaubigungsfunktion” (a sure authentication function).”

<sup>94</sup> Weber (1956, 46–47) describes the sociological characteristics related to performing miracles (by individuals proclaiming a religious doctrine or divine commandment) thus: “the bearers of new doctrine practically always needed such validation.”

### *1.7.3 The Legitimizing Effect of the Ananias and Sapphira Pericope*

The narrative account of Ananias and Sapphira's deaths (Acts 5:1–11) exhibits several legitimating techniques and merits a separate analysis.<sup>95</sup> This account parallels the Pentecost narrative in the legitimating technique of identifying the Jesus group with Israel's history. Old Testament cosmology is employed in this account, as it was in the Pentecost account, especially in illustrating a miraculous intersection between human and divine. Luke positions the Jesus group as authentic bearers of Israel's history and traditions, especially as those traditions entail custodial responsibilities related to holiness.

Fitzmyer (1998, 318) identifies six modern "modes" of interpreting this episode. Of these, the approach most relevant to this study is that which addresses the event as typology, assuming Luke draws his inspiration from a comparison of this episode to Old Testament episodes such as that of Achan in Joshua 7. This approach suggests that Luke's motive is to compare the historical Israel's understanding of sacred oath to that of the Jesus community. If the misuse of consecrated possessions was punishable by death during the early years of Israel's occupation of Palestine, so something similar could govern the early years of the Jesus movement.<sup>96</sup> While seeking interpretive insight from Israel's history is the correct approach to appreciate Luke's narration of this event, most of those who adopt this interpretive approach have failed to identify the legitimating use of this episode, especially in its primary role in Luke's construction of the symbolic universe of the Jesus movement. Luke's inclusion of

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<sup>95</sup> That commentators have rejected the facticity of this event is irrelevant to this study. We are reading Luke's composition as legitimation narrative, not historical documentation. For a thorough discussion of the various critical treatments of this pericope, see Fitzmyer (1998, 316–320). Cf. Conzelmann (1987, 37), Pfeiderer (1909, 210), and Dibelius (1956, 15–16).

<sup>96</sup> Fitzmyer notes that, other than the use of the same verb by the LXX (νοσφίζειν), there is no commonality evident in the Achan and Ananias/Sapphira texts.

the Ananias and Sapphira episode confirms the Jesus group as a locus of holiness (Derrett 1971, 231).<sup>97</sup>

Just as Luke's description of Pentecost narrated the initial re-identification of the Jesus group as a new locus of holiness by drawing on Old Testament phenomena of violent wind sounds and fire visions, so the confirmation of holiness' residency in the Jesus group is signalled by a death punishment miracle. Luke is positioning the Jesus community directly within Israel's covenant history as the custodial people of God's resident holiness. This is key to Luke's construction of the Jesus group's symbolic universe. As the *axis mundi* represented by Solomon's Temple (2 Chronicles 7:1–3) was validated by divinely initiated cosmic disturbances, including visible fire phenomenon, so also Luke's Pentecost was a divine validation of the Jesus group as a legitimate locus of holiness.<sup>98</sup> Likewise, as inappropriate contact with holiness was sometimes punished by divine execution in Israel's history, so the violation of holiness was punished by divine execution relative to the Jesus group. The punishment miracles in the Ananias-Sapphira incident invoke Israel's traditions, applying to the Jesus group the same sacred status as the holy place (Exodus 28:43, Leviticus 16:1–2), the ark of God (2 Samuel 6:6–7), and incense before the Lord's presence (Leviticus 10:1–3).<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> While Derrett (1971) clearly identifies the legitimating function of this episode and alludes to the implications for a new Israel, he fails to appreciate the full sociological significance of the event in validating the Jesus group as a social world qualified to interact with holiness in the same historical status as Israel, vis-a-vis the veil-rending and Pentecost. "Sapphira's death was a manifest validation obey God, or certification, of the Church's function, authority and message. 'Death at the hands of Heaven' reappeared as a clear authentication of the new Israel, and its covenant" (231)

<sup>98</sup> "When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshipped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, 'He is good; his love endures forever'" (2 Chronicles 7:1–3)

<sup>99</sup> "Aaron and his sons must wear them [linen undergarments] whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting or approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur guilt and die" (Exodus 28:43).

"The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the Lord. The Lord said to Moses: 'Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind

Douglas (1966) provides additional insight from her anthropological perspective, confirming the holiness-defilement contrast integral to Luke's conceptual machinery. Wholeness, completeness, and exclusivity of kind are also inherent to the concept of holiness. Lying, cheating, defrauding, and so forth, are proscribed because this creates confusion between what is and what seems to be. Contradiction cannot be consistent with holiness, which is integrity of kind, consistency, and completeness (63–67). The punishment miracle that evidences the danger of violating divine purity points directly to the holiness-purity concept at the heart of Luke's narrative purpose.

As described by Derrett (1971, 229–230), the peculiar circumstances surrounding the deaths and burials of this couple actually intensify the effectiveness of Luke's use of the event as legitimation when viewed against the socio-religious background of Luke's audience. The customary burial ceremonies and ritual mourning were proscribed when death was caused by an act of Heaven, suicide, social rebellion, apostasy, and capital punishment. The fact that Sapphira was not even aware of her husband's death and burial, and that her burial would be similarly conducted, strengthens our argument that Luke inserts this narrative account precisely and primarily for his legitimating purpose.

Luke's inclusion of the Ananias-Sapphira episode reflects several legitimating techniques. Divine approval of the group extends to enforcing holiness boundaries, including the exercise of divine power to put to death the violators. The ancient traditions are being invoked

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the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover” (Leviticus 16:1-2).

“When they came to the threshing floor of Nacón, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God” (2 Samuel 6:6–7).

“Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to his command. So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Moses then said to Aaron, ‘This is what the Lord spoke of when he said: “Among those who approach me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored”’” (Leviticus 10:1–3).

as authentically applicable to the new society for precisely the same reasons as historically understood. Perhaps most effective as a legitimating technique is the antithesis implied by the stark absence of any such extraordinary holiness enforcement relative to the temple. Luke has narratively painted the temple leadership as in chronic violation of holiness (false witness, jealousy, opposing the Holy Spirit), yet God does not move against the perpetrators. The implication is that the temple no longer represents holiness and, therefore, it is unnecessary to protect a sacred presence. Compare again this portrait of the temple system to that in the first two chapters of Luke's gospel, where we see Zechariah being punished for his violation, which was committed in the holy place.<sup>100</sup>

### 1.8 Summarizing Luke's Constructed Symbolic Universe

Within the first seven chapters, Luke constructs the basic symbolic universe of the Jesus group, legitimating the Jesus movement at the highest sociological level according to Berger and Luckmann. As this universe is constructed in the narrative, Luke also employs strong legitimating techniques to demonstrate the validity, even superiority, of this emerging symbolic universe over and against that of Israelite religion generally and the temple system specifically, within which it was distinguishing itself. The Acts text following these first seven chapters adds to and continues legitimating the Jesus group. However, the legitimation focus turns from primarily validating the symbolic universe, relative to Judaism's universe, toward legitimating the purity map that was necessarily forming as the concretization of the newly forming symbolic universe. Luke demonstrates in these first seven chapters that the Jesus group is a legitimate custodian of holiness, a responsibility Israel had exercised exclusively from ancient times. But if this new

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<sup>100</sup> I am convinced Zechariah's muteness was punitive. When he asked the angel how he would know this could happen, the angel's response states that Gabriel's presence alone should have convinced Zechariah (Luke 1:18, 19). Luke 1:20 clearly states that the muteness was inflicted because of Zechariah's failure to believe. In the very place where Zechariah should have anticipated the manifest presence of holiness, he failed to believe, violating that sacred place and his sacred vocational trust.

Jesus society enjoyed the legitimate status as custodian of holiness, it also bore the awesome responsibility of protecting holiness from defilement. This meant defining and legitimating purity boundaries around and within the society. The holiness of God must be protected from defilement, both from out-group impurity, and from impurity that might be present inside the community. A poignant in-group/out-group awareness is signalled by Luke in Acts 5:12 – 14, pointing to the clear boundaries honoured by both in- and out-group individuals:

The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

### 1.9 The Required Revised Purity Maps of Luke's Symbolic Universe

Luke's emphasis shifts, beginning in Acts 8, from primarily constructing the basic symbolic universe to struggling to concretize the new cosmology into institutionalized purity boundaries. Berger (1967) describes this process as the social ordering of experience (19). As the experiences of the community are interpreted (assigned meaning and significance within the larger and sacred cosmos), a "meaningful order, or nomos, is imposed upon the discrete experiences and meanings of individuals" (19). The cosmic reality (symbolic universe) demonstrated in the first seven chapters of Acts becomes increasingly ordered and institutionalized as Luke narrates events that nomize the community's subjective and objective reality. Douglas (1966) argues that culture itself is organized as a purity system, defining boundaries, lines, and classifications so as to identify a place for everything.<sup>101</sup> Douglas and Berger together inform our perception of Luke's narrative treatment of events illustrating the emerging nomos of the Jesus society,

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<sup>101</sup> Borg (1984, 9) refines Douglas' social anthropological theory that all cultures are organized as purity systems by narrowing it to apply only to those societies using explicit purity language. Borg's refinement of Douglas helps us identify Judaism and the Jesus group as clearly organized as a purity system.



namely the institutions, boundaries, and classifications articulating the relationship of the community to holiness, and the consequential conflicts this articulation produced.

It is following Stephen's death that we see Luke's narrative organization begin to produce details of a purity map. The Israelite degrees of geographic holiness outlined in chapter one provide an interpretive paradigm for Luke's legitimation formula following Acts 7. It must be argued that Jesus' statement recorded in Acts 1:8 reflects this holiness map and represents the commissioning of the Jesus community with custodial responsibility of holiness, in a concentric expansion parallel to the degrees of holiness in Israelite cosmology.<sup>102</sup> Jesus' promise, then, would be understood against the backdrop of the Israelite holiness map. He promises his followers that, after holiness had invaded their collectivity, they would present evidence of that reality in the same progression with which Israelites (especially Judeans) were already familiar. This places Jesus' prediction squarely within Israelite expectations, which would be evoked by the reference to God's holiness (the Holy Spirit) coming upon them.

## **2 Legitimation in Concentric Spheres and Social Institutions**

Beginning in Acts 8:1, Luke moves the narrative away from Jerusalem and into the adjacent regions of Judea and Samaria. Luke's foundational legitimation of the Jesus group as a social world most authentically representing Yahweh worship has been completed in the Jerusalem context of a conflict dynamic with the temple. Because Luke was legitimating the Jesus community as an authentic form of Yahwism at the highest level, namely at the level of constructing and validating its symbolic universe, it was necessary to keep the narrative events juxtaposed to the temple, the Israelite centre of historical worship of Yahweh. The major components of the symbolic universe are defined and legitimated, but Yahweh worship,

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<sup>102</sup> Brawley (1987, 28ff) calls the scholarly consensus, which regards Acts 1:8 as geographically programmatic for Acts, into question. He proposes instead that this passage refers to the ethnic expansion of Christianity (33).

as described in chapter 1.3.3, was not a monolithic religion. If the Jesus movement was to truly achieve the status of a fully legitimated Yahweh worship form, the legitimation must succeed in additional dimensions. These dimensions include the legitimation of the Jesus movement among and against other Judaisms, such as the Samaritans and those Judaisms represented in the *Diaspora*. They also include the legitimation of institutions within the Jesus community related to beliefs and practices that conflict with other traditional Judaisms. Although Luke will return the narrative setting to Jerusalem several more times, the legitimation focus will shift from the overarching validation of the symbolic universe to that generated by conflicts with Judaisms outside Jerusalem and internal institutional conflicts.

## 2.1 Legitimation among the Samaritans

Before moving the narrative to Samaria, Luke introduces Saul, a figure who will evolve in Luke's legitimation formula as central to the Jesus movement's validation among *Diaspora* Judaisms. Luke's introduction of Saul here establishes the backdrop for Saul's legitimation role later in the narrative as a holy man mediating the sacred. Saul is zealously loyal to the temple system and dedicated to its defence as the legitimate *axis mundi*. It is important to Luke's formula that Saul be seen in the full intensity of this loyalty to the very symbolic universe diminished by the first seven chapters.

The missional activity of Philip in Samaria is especially noteworthy to our study because the Samaritans represent an alternative Judaism to those centred around the Jerusalem temple (see Elliot 2007, 134; Overman and Green 1992, 1046–1047; Purvis 1986, 92).<sup>103</sup> A feature of Samaritan Judaism particularly relevant to this study is that these were a circumcised people.

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<sup>103</sup> Like the variety of Judaisms extant in the first-century circum Mediterranean world, there were also a variety of Samaritan-isms (Purvis 1986, 95). Our consideration of Luke's legitimation formula, including drawing a social boundary inclusive of Samaritans, is not influenced by nuanced differences in religious doctrines or practices.

Samaritan loyalty to the Abrahamic covenant and the Torah required they observe the practice of circumcision. Unlike the later Cornelius household account, there was no reluctance by Peter and John to pray that these people receive the Holy Spirit. Note the striking difference in Luke's narration associating the Holy Spirit with the Samaritans and that referencing the Holy Spirit to the Cornelius household (Acts 10:45–48). That Luke expects no hesitation from his readers in accepting the Samaritans' exposure to holiness is evident by the absence of any preparatory or apologetic statements, such as that associated with the Cornelius and Antioch episodes. In other words, Luke's Samaritans were qualified by their circumcision to be compatible with holiness.<sup>104</sup> This will be further analysed in the discussion of the Cornelius episode in the next chapter addressing glossolalia.

The brief summary of Philip's ministry in Samaria again demonstrates legitimization of the Jesus movement through miracle events, including exorcisms, and the record of the Samaritans' popular response. Luke's concern is to broaden the legitimization formula to confirm the movement's validity vis-à-vis Samaritan Judaism. Luke's now turns his attention to drawing and legitimating new social boundaries within his symbolic universe. Social boundaries are one of the institutions of a social world, and Luke is now more attentive to addressing how various individual institutions emerged in the Jesus group and are legitimated against opposition.

Since the Samaritan worldview embraced the practice of magic, at least at the popular level, Luke uses the events listed above to stage the contrast between magic and the legitimating miracles performed in Jesus' name. Magic was not an unknown component of *Diaspora* Judaisms, and Luke intentionally differentiates between the miracle events so crucial

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<sup>104</sup> Cohen's states that circumcision "became the marker for Jewish identity—at least in Palestine—in the Maccabean period" (Cohen 1993, 13). He also observes that "upon conquering various sections of the holy land they [Maccabees] compelled the inhabitants to follow Jewish customs, a demand that meant first and foremost circumcision" (Cohen 1987, 52–53). It is possible, if not probable, that the Samaritans assimilated the self-identification of circumcision as a result of this Maccabean imposition.

to his legitimization formula and the magic somewhat common to existing Judaic religions (see Craffert 1993, 254–255; Neusner 1986, 8–9).

Reimer's (2002) treatment of miracles and magic in first century C. E. and as these are depicted in Acts is helpful to our discussion here. Magic, as described by anthropologists, was the manipulation of laws and principles such that the effects were predictable and repeatable. Miracles were the propitiation of power from a source superior to humans that is believed to control life. Magic was manipulative; miracle was supplicative (Reimer 2002, 4–5). Reimer (2002, 92) provides other characteristics distinguishing miracle from magic, such as whether the performer mediated earthly or heavenly power and whether the performer intended to enhance only himself or something other than himself, such as a deity or a particular message (see also Pilch 2004, 63).

From the sociology of knowledge discipline comes further refinement of this distinction, suggesting that the perspective of the author often determines whether an act is miracle or magic. Magic is a locative term—miracle is in-group—magic is out-group (Reimer 2002, 8).<sup>105</sup> Choi (1997, 80) points out that sectarian groups or individuals who deviated from the dominant social values supported by traditional religion were often accused (by the dominant religion) of practicing magic as an explanation for their deviance.<sup>106</sup>

It emerges, then, that Luke intends to vaccinate his miracle event accounts from the pejorative label *magic* and, thus, vaccinate the Jesus movement from any deviant or subversive labels. By casting miracle accounts directly opposite to a popular magician, he accomplishes

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<sup>105</sup> Although Reimer (10) goes on to argue that we need to move beyond this sociology of knowledge loop that views the distinction between magic and miracle as no more than intergroup polemics, the application to our study is the same. Whether Luke is purposely labelling Simon's activities as magic merely to cast him as out-group is not important. What is key is that Luke intends to legitimate his miracles as superior to the works performed by those not associated with the Jesus movement.

<sup>106</sup> The example of Celsus' accusation that Christianity practised magic (having been founded by a magician) is just such an example.

this purpose, not only linguistically with his magic-versus-miracle terminology, but implicitly through Simon's behaviour. Simon is awed by Philip's miracle acts (Acts 8:13) and was eager to acquire the apostles' miracle power (Acts 8:18–19). Peter's indictment of Simon's motives achieves Luke's purpose of casting Simon (and his magic) as inferior to the legitimating miracles of the Jesus movement. Demonstrating the apostles' access to divine power and approval, and casting Simon's magic (and his motives) as antithetical to miracles, eventually denouncing him as an opponent, emerge clearly as part of Luke's legitimation formula.

Luke's matter-of-fact statement that the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit and with some kind of observable phenomenon is significant to our consideration of the social role of glossolalia. A fuller analysis of the relationship of the Samaritan believers to holiness and the Holy Spirit will be reserved for the next chapter.

## 2.2 Transforming Saul into a Divine Mediator to the *Diaspora*

Saul has already made a brief appearance on Luke's narrative stage as the temple-endorsed enemy of the Jesus society, inflicting significant suffering and social disruption on its members. In Acts 9:1–31, Saul's role vis-à-vis the Jesus movement is converted from violent antagonist to mediator of the divine to the *Diaspora* and the Gentiles. Saul plays the prominent role in Luke's legitimation of the Jesus movement among *Diaspora* Israelites and to Gentiles. As will be shown below in reviewing the missionary campaigns, Luke's use of Saul (Paul) to legitimate the Jesus movement among *Diaspora* Judaism further defines social and purity boundaries, legitimating these boundaries as institutions within the Jesus groups' symbolic universe.

Luke employs stark antithesis to illustrate the legitimacy of Saul's conversion from narrative antagonist to protagonist ardently representing the Jesus movement. Establishing first that Saul was empowered by the temple leaders to diminish the Jesus group, a commission he zealously and violently executed, Luke then narrates his extraordinary encounter with Jesus.

The result is a holy man, chosen and commissioned by the divine Jesus to mediate the sacred to designated societies. The legitimacy of Saul in this role rests on the divine initiative in choosing, commissioning, and empowering this holy man.

Saul will become, as Paul, a stereotypical holy man, in the mode prevalent in first-century circum-Mediterranean Judaism. *Diasporic* synagogue-centred Judaism, distanced from the direct influence of the temple cult, replaced the temple's mediation of the sacred with other sources (Craffert 1993, 253–254). One of these sources was the holy man, one who had access to divine power and who could speak for God, mediating the sacred in ways that affected purity status, such as demon exorcisms (Pilch 2004, 16–17). Paul “perfectly fits the shamanistic role of a divine man” (Craffert 1993, 256). It is in this role that Luke will use Paul to represent the Jesus movement to the *Diaspora* and Gentile world. As a mediator of the divine and a spokesperson for the Jesus movement, Luke demonstrates the legitimacy of the Jesus community and its institutions throughout various social groups.

As with the Samaritans, the narrative indicates that Saul was to be filled (πλησθεῖς) with the Holy Spirit, but does not record any verifying phenomenon. The immediacy of Saul's public apologetic representation of Jesus adds to Luke's legitimization scheme, showing the authenticity of Saul's extraordinary encounter and divine commissioning through antithesis—vehement enemy becomes vehement spokesperson. Saul's character has been fully presented as the legitimate holy man.

### 2.3 Using Peter to Redraw Purity Boundaries

Luke's legitimization narrative responds to conflicts from both without the Jesus community and within. The very existence of the community as a legitimate, if not superior, Judaism is demonstrated by the construction and validation of its symbolic universe over against the temple in the first seven chapters of Acts. The movement of the narrative from Jerusalem positions the

legitimation strategy in Judaisms not centred by practice in the temple cult. This movement broadens Luke's legitimation formula to bring the demonstrated legitimacy into intersection with these various Judaisms. But Luke must also demonstrate legitimation of the various emerging institutions of the developing Jesus society, most particularly the social boundary defining in-group-out-group vis-à-vis the purity categories of human beings. Just as conflict with the temple leadership motivated and organized the legitimation of the Jesus movement's symbolic universe, conflicts regarding institutional social boundaries motivated and organized the legitimation of new boundaries. The conflicts generated by these new boundaries are a prevailing theme in Acts following chapter 9.<sup>107</sup>

The major conflict, and one that forms a unifying thematic thread throughout Acts 10–28 is that surrounding the social boundary administered through circumcision.<sup>108</sup> It is the struggle to reclassify a previously unclean category of the human population (Gentiles), the marker that signals their qualification to be reclassified (glossolalia), and the need to legitimate this boundary marker that occupies a central literary purpose in Acts 10–28.

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<sup>107</sup> Internal social conflict was evident in Luke's narrative world before chapter nine, for example the internal social conflict between Hebrew and Greek-speaking members regarding care of widows as addressed in Acts 7. Although the social implications are significant to Luke's legitimation program overall, they are not relevant to this study's focus on the social role of glossolalia and its meaning in the Ephesian disciple pericope.

<sup>108</sup> Research indicates that circumcision among western *Diaspora* Israelites was not universally practiced or recognized as a mandatory condition of Israelite social identity (Malina and Pilch 2006, 338). While this is interesting to note, it is not relevant to our legitimation discussion. Luke avoids any qualifying references to *Diaspora* groups whose circumcision customs may have differed from those centred around Jerusalem and the temple. Obviously, the need for legitimation of a new boundary was not aimed at groups who failed to enforce existing boundaries.

## CHAPTER 3 THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF GLOSSOLALIA IN ACTS

### 1 Glossolalic Phenomena in Acts: A Brief Survey

This study proposes that glossolalia fulfils a distinct social function in Luke's legitimization formula. This chapter will explore this function as an integral part of Luke's legitimization strategy within the Acts narrative. A brief survey of glossolalia as presented in the Acts narrative will be followed by analyses of the several specific Holy Spirit and glossolalia passages and their social functions within the broader narrative body. Reviewing and analysing the social function of glossolalia are a required foundation to the final analysis in the next chapter of the social and narratological meaning and significance of the Ephesian disciple pericope.

Whether Luke's use of *glossolalia* was actually intended as xenoglossy or ecstatic or inspired speech is not relevant to this study.<sup>109</sup> Also irrelevant is the psychological state of those performing glossolalia (trance, altered state of consciousness, and so forth). What is highly relevant to this study is the fact that audiences in Luke's narration conclude that these extraordinary speech events are of divine cause and miraculous (Johnson 1992, 194–195, 338; Haenchen 1971, 174; see also Johnson 1998, 116, 119, 125). Luke also writes with the assumption that his readers will be convinced and arrive at this same conclusion. The glossolalic events are presented as actual behaviours observable to spectators, rather than self-reported internal sensations or private experiences. The speech events are unique enough

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<sup>109</sup> Cf. Fitzmyer 1998, 236–237; Marshall 1969, 80; Munck 1967, 271–275; Haenchen 1971, 168; Witherington 1998, 133.



to inspire strong reaction in observers, ranging from ridicule to curiosity to awe. Glossolalia, in Luke's narrative world, does not seem to be recognized by its audiences as a commonly known religious phenomenon. This conclusion is consistent with Forbes' assertion that there are "no compelling parallels, either at the level of phenomenon, or at the level of theological concepts" within Hellenistic or Jewish literature (1995, v).<sup>110</sup> According to Forbes' study, Luke's narrative audiences would not have specifically identified observed glossolalia with any known religious phenomena, although religious ecstasy was certainly associated with various pagan religions. The conclusion, then, is that glossolalia was, in its Jesus-group manifestation, a unique phenomenon that was associated with the Jesus community as an evidence of divine activity (see Esler 1994, 49, 50). This conclusion is well-articulated in Peter's Pentecost speech, which provides the definitive interpretation of glossolalia for Luke's narrative world (Johnson 1998, 119; 1992, 53–54).

This study will identify glossolalia as a language miracle that serves the legitimating purpose of miracles generally (see Reimer 2002, for example 48, 91, 92, 102; see also Johnson 1998, 107–117). I do not assume any hypothesis about the actual or lexicographical nature of the glossolalic event or whether it should be more accurately classified as xenoglossy, inspired speech, or ecstatic utterance. Miracle terminology best fits the audiences' reaction and Luke's narrative and legitimating purposes. As a form of miracle, the legitimating implication is obvious. The tongues speech was "God-induced and God-inspired" (Pilch 2004, 31). This phenomenon, being of divine origin, was, therefore, evidence of God's approval and the performers' access to God (see the discussion of Pentecost in the previous chapter). Luke makes it clear in Acts

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<sup>110</sup> Watson Mills (1997) comes to a conclusion different from Forbes but seems to contradict himself. First he states, "Contrary to many modern writers, the case is not so easily made for the existence of parallels to glossolalia among the 'religions of the first century'" (38). In his conclusion, however, he states, "I am postulating that when the texts of Acts and 1 Corinthians were written there was extant a widely known practice variously referred to by terms like ecstatic or ecstaticism" (39). The difficulty in applying Mills research to this study is his insistence that glossolalia in Paul's Corinthian letter is identical to that in Acts 2, and thus fits a universal religious model. Mills also fails to address Forbes' arguments dismissing his Hellenistic literature examples.

2:4, 10:44–46, and 19:6 that the ability to speak in tongues was subsequent to the Holy Spirit’s coming upon them. In all three passages, glossolalia was prime evidence that the Holy Spirit was present and associated with the tongues-speaker as an enabling agent. It is expressed in Acts 2:4 and implied in the other two passages that the ability to perform this phenomenon was directly provided by the present Holy Spirit. In Luke’s Acts narrative, then, glossolalia indicates God’s presence, God’s initiative, and God’s agency in performing the language miracle.

As Reimer describes, there is a key difference between the glossolalic miracle events and other miracles (2002, 102). Generally, miracles are performed by mediators of divine power, agents whose access to and approval by God allow them to mediate His power in miraculous events. Glossolalia as a language miracle, however, “is a rather democratic experience that seems to occur with persons one would not distinguish as religious virtuosi” (Reimer 2002, 102). Reimer identifies other forms of language miracle (extraordinary speech), such as prophecy, curse pronouncements, and divinely inspired and aided speech (in the hearers’ language, such as Acts 4:8, 13) (2002, 102–103). The other forms of language miracle better fit the mediated miracle genre. In other words, glossolalia is enabled by the Holy Spirit, who is the agent of miraculous power rather than a human intermediary being the agent.

A key distinction between the glossolalia events in Acts and other language miracles in antiquity is agency. Prophecy, spirit-emboldened speech, curse pronouncements (arguably a type of prophecy), and other extraordinary speech events are mediated through a human representative who delivers information to a human audience from or about divinity.<sup>111</sup> The intermediary is viewed as a gifted person of some status. The Pentecost language miracle differs significantly from other inspired speech in that it was not a mediated event. Jesus

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<sup>111</sup> For discussion of holy men, see Pilch 2004, 16–17, 40 and 1999, 79–84. Such a divine intermediary is defined by Pilch as “characterized by an ability to have ready and direct access to God and the realm of God, and to broker power and favors from that realm to human beings.” (For further discussion of the shamanistic model of Diaspora Judaism and the role of holy men, see Lightstone 1984, 7, 40–49, and 1988, 15.)

followers, gathered in the upper room, were directly engaged by the Holy Spirit, evidenced by the glossolalic behaviour (and other visual and auditory phenomena). In Luke's narrative world, this event signals a God-initiated, unmediated intersection between the entire body of recipients (individually and collectively) and God's Potent Presence. At Pentecost, there was no human agent for the audience to identify as the mediator, none whose charisma and divine favour mediated divine power to the Jesus group recipients.

To be sure, one could argue that the Holy Spirit advent in Cornelius' house was mediated by Peter's presence and speech. This argument may be further supported by the Holy Spirit events at Samaria, when Peter and John came to supplement Philip's evangelistic campaign. However, the difference between the glossolalic events and other mediated miracles remains and is clear in Lucan narration. These divine holy men may have mediated the advent of the Holy Spirit, but the language miracle produced by direct Holy Spirit enablement was the accompanying evidence of human intersection with holiness.

Although authenticated divine intermediaries (Peter at Cornelius' house and Paul in Ephesus) were present and were engaged with the recipients, the narrative makes it clear that the tongues were generated by the present Holy Spirit. In the Cornelius episode, the narrative builds the expanded case that it was God's prior intent to bring the Cornelius household into the Jesus community fellowship. Given the narrative build-up, it could even be argued that Peter was brought into the event more as a witness than as a mediator. The Ephesian disciples' Holy Spirit encounter is clearly the result of the use of the name of Jesus and its initiation of the Holy Spirit's advent. To be sure, Paul was present as intermediary—administering the baptism rite—but the language miracle happened only after the Holy Spirit came upon them. Specific treatments of the Cornelius event and the Ephesian disciple's event will follow. The point here is simply the unique characteristic of glossolalia as an originally unmediated language miracle

(Pentecost) and, subsequently, as an indirectly mediated event (among the Cornelius household and at Ephesus).

It is the uniquely unmediated characteristic of this language miracle phenomenon that qualifies it for its social function. The perception that it was initiated by God, rather than a human mediator, allows it to accrue special status within the Jesus community and, consequently, for Luke's broader narrative world and his readers. Berger (1967, 33–38) describes this dynamic as a necessary component of the legitimation of a society, and its individual institutions, whose reality is contested or threatened:

The historically crucial part of religion in the process of legitimation is explicable in terms of the unique capacity of religion to “locate” human phenomena within a cosmic frame of reference. All legitimation serves to maintain reality—reality, that is, as defined in a particular human collectivity. Religious legitimation purports to relate the humanly defined reality to ultimate, universal and sacred reality. . . . Put differently, the humanly constructed *nomoi* are given a cosmic status. (35–36)

## **2 Glossolalia in the Cornelius Episode**

Reading Acts as a legitimation exercise for the Jesus movement places the Peter-Cornelius account as a watershed episode in the narrative structure. The first seven chapters, composed on the foundation of the Pentecost events and crafted around the temple and temple-related conflicts, constructed the overarching symbolic universe for the social world emerging around the Jesus followers. This social world (community) was legitimated as an Israelite religion, constituted by divine intervention and intention, and validated by miraculous sanction. The Jesus community's authenticated position and role in the cosmos was thus demonstrated by Luke's legitimating conceptual machinery.

As discussed previously in chapter 2, section 1.2, legitimation occurs at different levels, usually determined by the challenges to the social worlds' status and the emerging conflicts that compel the legitimation. At a lower level, select institutions within a social world require legitimation when they are contested or when they need to be passed to subsequent generations

of members. In addition to demonstrating the legitimacy of the Jesus movement as a valid, if not superior, Judaism in the contexts of other Judaisms, Luke addresses the need to legitimate the redrawn social boundaries. The Judaism evolving among the Jesus followers was pressed to accommodate new social institutions, such as boundaries drawn to include those institutions more traditional Judaisms excluded.

A focusing conflict in Acts beginning with the Cornelius episode relates to social boundaries determining in-group from out-group. The survival of the Jesus movement as a legitimate form of Yahwism and the successful consolidation of its followers and transfer to subsequent generations required a high degree of cohesion and integrity, in addition to a persuasive demonstration of its cosmological validity. This required cohesion and integrity demanded legitimation of the emerging social institutions that were challenged from within and without.

Chapter one, section 5.2, discussed the institutional boundaries of the social world of Israelite Yahweh worship. Although observance of these boundaries varied throughout ancient Judaisms, the boundaries represent the overarching traditions of Yahweh worship. The conflicts in Acts related to these boundaries form the motivation for and focus of Luke's legitimation of the emerging Jesus group's boundaries. The institutional boundary of Yahweh worship excluded non-Israelites. Gentiles were impure and, as such, were incompatible with holiness. Gentile impurity polluted everything it contacted, rendering the contacted object also impure and incompatible with holiness. The issues of purity, pollution, and related social boundaries occupy, even organize, the content of Acts following chapter 9.

### 2.1 Clean and Unclean as Controlling Social Conscience

With the introduction of Cornelius, Luke brings to the forefront of his narrative the Israelite consciousness regarding the states of clean and unclean. By covenant, Israelites were custodians

of holiness, required to be a holy people in a relatively constant state of purity. Non-Israelites were unclean and incompatible with holiness and bore the contagion of pollution to anything with which they came into contact. Luke brings Cornelius into the narrative precisely to introduce the social boundary issue related to clean-unclean. The centrality of this issue to the narrative scheme signifies the sponsoring conflict within the Jesus group. We can surmise from Luke's narrative treatment of this issue that it represented a major obstacle to cohesion and integrity within the Jesus community. Such a lack of cohesion and integrity diminished legitimacy to out-group observers, which included both antagonists and potential in-group members.

The purity conflict theme of the entire Cornelius episode constitutes Luke's purpose for its inclusion, explains its relatively extensive treatment and its placement in the narrative as a watershed legitimating event. The first part of the episode is comprised of Peter's vision, the substance of which is explicitly the imminent revision of the historical Israelite purity classifications and markers. The fact that the issue is introduced as a miracle event (vision) with the primary message issuing from God himself points to the legitimating purpose of its inclusion in the narrative (see Haenchen 1971, 360). In other words, subsequent purity classification revisions are initiated by God and possess the highest degree of validity. As Neyrey states, "God himself upset the perceived map which indicated who enjoyed God's favor and who was in the inner circle of God's elect" (1991 297)

The content of Peter's vision event in Acts 10:9–16 directly confronts the historical Israelite purity systems. Three times God impresses on Peter that clean-unclean designations are God's prerogative and that the unclean status of an object can be reversed by God's purifying intervention. Peter's vision experience is ostensibly an open challenge to the defenders of historical Yahwism, whose resistance to the ensuing purity classification changes pits them

directly against God. It is also noteworthy that the Jesus group, as represented in its leader, Peter, cannot be blamed for the radical modification of Israel's purity boundaries represented by the Cornelius household baptisms. Peter protests these modifications, rehearsing his allegiance to Israel's traditional boundaries and insisting on his own purity sensitivities. Peter's resistance amplifies the legitimating effect of the vision experience, confirming divine initiative.

The frequency and prominence of purity issues and the related boundaries within Acts confirm Luke's focus on legitimating the Jesus movement's revised purity boundaries against prevailing conflicts.<sup>112</sup> Note the sequence and number of purity references in the narrative:

- 1) Peter's vision experience alerts him to God's orientation toward modifying traditional purity classifications and conditions him for compliance. This includes the instruction, against Peter's purity sensitivities, to "not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them" (Acts 10:20).
- 2) Peter's initial greeting to Cornelius' extended household gathering is a description of the purity conflict associated with his participation in this function: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection" (Acts 10:28–29).
- 3) Peter confirms his own reorientation toward purity issues, based on his vision experience and Cornelius's report of a parallel vision experience: "Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism"" (Acts 10:34).<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Seland reports thirty Jewish-Christian conflicts in Acts (1998, 169)

<sup>113</sup> It is noteworthy that Peter's Pentecost speech was not intended to encompass non-Israelites in its scope of reference, applying the Joel prophecy only to covenant Israelites. Our anachronistic and ethnocentric reading of Peter's speech perceives a far wider ethnic application than is possible, given Peter's prejudice at the time the speech was delivered.

- 4) Peter's companions are astonished (ἐξέτησαν) when Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit. The word translated "astonished" indicates intense amazement, to the point of being beside oneself, usually "with a strong sense of the numinous" (Oepke TDNT).<sup>114</sup> This intense astonishment is the direct response to unclean Gentiles encountering holiness, especially as this event was initiated by God.
- 5) The evidence of the Gentile holiness encounter is glossolalia (λαλεῖν γλώσσαις), a sign that prevents any doubt that the holiness encounter was authentic.
- 6) This episode is Luke's first identification of the Israelite Jesus followers by the circumcision label. The use of this label at this point in the narrative is a strong signal of contrast with the unclean, non-circumcised recipients of the Spirit's visitation: "The circumcised believers who had come with Peter" (Acts 10:45). Luke's identification of the circumcised believers as such can only be intended to draw attention to this social boundary marker and to bring it directly into play in the legitimation strategy.<sup>115</sup> Dunn (1996, 145) states that Luke's use here of "from the circumcision . . . signals that they represent that portion of the church which continued to regard circumcision as the most distinctive feature of the covenant people, and who would thus be most convinced circumcision had to be maintained."
- 7) Peter challenges an unspecified audience: "Then Peter said, 'Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as

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<sup>114</sup> "The word also bears the sense b. ['to be terrified out of one's wits'] when used of astonishment at the revelation of the divine glory, whether in the child Jesus (Lk. 2:47), His miracles (Mt. 12:23; Mk. 2:12; Mt. 9:8 ἐφοβήθησαν; 5:42; Mk. 6:51, Mt. 14:33 προσεκύνησαν; Lk. 8:56), or the wonderful experiences of the early community (Ac. 2:7, synon. θαυμάζω, 12, synon. διαπορέω; 8:13; 9:21; 10:45; 12:16). The term reflects the powerful religious experience of the early Church" (Oepke TDNT).

<sup>115</sup> See also Johnson 1992, 189, 198.



we have” (Acts 10:46–47).<sup>116</sup> Clearly from the context, Peter must be addressing the circumcised believers who have just been acutely astonished by the Gentiles’ inclusion in a holiness encounter. The challenge is whether the Gentiles present, who are marked with a holiness encounter, can be prevented from initiation into the Jesus community. In other words, Peter’s challenge is “Who can prevent these from becoming in-group members in our social world?” This is a direct challenge to the circumcision purity identity just applied by Luke. It cannot be ignored that Luke is confronting the circumcision boundary marker with Peter’s challenge, rhetorically inviting the illogical and now God-defiant insistence on enforcing the traditional Israelite social marker (circumcision).

In his concise discussion of rituals and boundaries, Neyrey (1990, 87) states that baptism was the entrance ritual particular to the Jesus movement, while circumcision was the ritual characteristic of the followers of Moses. The Cornelius episode makes clear that the baptismal ritual marking the boundary crossing into the Jesus community was previously only available to those of the circumcised people. The ritual would not be administered to uncircumcised individuals, regardless of their piety and devotion to the gospel proclamation. This introduces an interesting distinction between ritual and marker. The ritual marking the crossing into the bounded social world was baptism. But this ritual was not available to those whose unclean status would bring pollution into contact with holiness. As Douglas points out, “The only way in which pollution ideas make sense is in reference to a total structure of thought whose keystone, boundaries, margins and internal lines are held in relation by rituals of separation” (1966, 51;

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<sup>116</sup> Peter must be appealing to those men from Joppa who accompanied him (Acts 10:23) to Cornelius’ house. This makes Peter’s plural possessive pronoun a possible indicator of the pervasiveness of the Spirit-inspired glossolalia. If Peter’s statement that “they have received the Holy Spirit just as *we* have” is meant to indicate the men from Joppa, it points to a Holy Spirit reception experience common to Jesus followers at Joppa. It cannot be determined from this context whether Peter uses “we” to refer to a limited Jerusalem Pentecost group or as a possessive plural encompassing present company.

see also 27, 199). The baptism ritual was the Jesus group's enforcement of the boundary that protected the sacred presence of God from pollution. But God interrupted the administration of this social map with the Cornelius event. The ritual must now be administered to those God himself had marked in the flesh. As Esler (1994) states:

It is clear that in this narrative the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles, manifested in glossolalia, serves as the final and irrefutable legitimation for the acceptance of the Gentiles into the community. . . . the author presents the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially glossolalia, as the critical factor in the acceptance of the Gentiles into the Christian community, which acceptance extends ultimately to their being welcomed into eucharistic table-fellowship with Jewish members of the community. (38)

Luke continues the purity conflict theme in Peter's report to the Jerusalem believers' group. Again, those in Jerusalem who initially oppose Peter's social interaction with Gentiles are labelled the *circumcision group*, focusing the reader's attention on the purity conflict and the social implications. Peter's perceived social deviance, entering a Gentile house and even participating in table fellowship (probably involving eucharistic elements), elicits strong criticism from this group. Regardless of whether the Gentile was a God-fearer or not, dining with Gentiles was unacceptable "if such dining involved the passing around, the handling by all present, of the one loaf of bread and the one cup of wine. . . . A person was either a member of the covenant community, as demonstrated by circumcision, or not" (Esler 1994, 63). The group is convinced otherwise, however, by Peter's rehearsal of his vision experience and the mode by which the Gentiles experienced the Holy Spirit. Luke closes Peter's apology for his social deviance by expressing through Peter to the Jerusalem opposition what was implicit from the beginning of the episode: "'Who was I to think that I could oppose God?'" (Acts 11:17). Reclassifying Gentiles as in-group members, compatible with the holiness resident in the Jesus

community since Pentecost, is legitimate based on the divine prerogative to cleanse them. This imputed purity status is evidenced by glossolalia and qualifies Gentiles to exercise contact with holiness. In other words, the mark of purity classification is glossolalia, which in the Cornelius episode clearly superseded circumcision as the boundary marker. Luke makes sure his readers do not fail to associate the glossolalic marker with purity status by using the circumcision label for Israelite believers, especially those resisting Gentile social inclusion. That Luke validates inclusion of Gentiles is obvious, and resonates throughout scholarly literature. What has not been addressed prior to this study is that Luke demonstrates glossolalia's supersession of circumcision as a social marker.

The Cornelius account is about social boundaries.<sup>117</sup> This account is developed and placed in the narrative according to its function, which is to legitimate the Jesus movement's non-traditional (vis-à-vis Israelite history) social configuration. The Cornelius account serves as a literary watershed in that it is inserted precisely at the point the narrative focus moves away from Jerusalem and into the world of *Diaspora* Yahwism and Gentile dominance. Prior to Acts 10, the narrative characters have all been Israelites with at least minimal purity status relative to the temple cult and its legal traditions. Luke, previous to Acts 10, touches on some internal social conflicts (the Hellenist versus Hebrew widows in Acts 6) and confirms the continuation of Jesus' inclusive approach to impure categories of Israelites (e.g., Peter's stay with Simon the Tanner).<sup>118</sup> However, all characters have been of the circumcision. In preparation for Luke's relocation of the narrative into the *Diaspora*, he lays the foundation by introducing

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<sup>117</sup> Witherington (1998, 361) hints at such an awareness of Luke's social program by applying to the Cornelius event this statement: "From a legal perspective Paul may not have startled the Jewish Christian community so much by saying circumcision was unnecessary for gentile salvation *per se*, as claiming that the saved Jews and Gentiles could form a single new community and freely interact."

<sup>118</sup> For an excellent summary of examples in Luke-Acts of purity map deviations, see Neyrey 1991, 285–298).

and legitimating a new social boundary in the Jesus movement's purity map. This new social boundary is marked by glossolalia, a mark in the flesh performed by God. Malina and Pilch (2008, 80) summarize this point succinctly by stating, "The most significant feature of chapter 10 is that it was the God of Israel, at work through his Spirit, who was responsible for having non-Israelites join the Jesus group, and this the Jesus group in Judea." Not only is the new boundary inclusive of non-Israelite ethnicity, it also seems to transcend gender distinctions, unlike the temple precincts, which physically marginalized women from the presence of God's holiness.

## 2.2 Comparing the Cornelius, Samaritan Mission, and Saul's Conversion Events

Two distinctions are obvious between the Cornelius and the Samaritan events. First, there is no evident purity conflict issues related to Philip's mission among the Samaritans.<sup>119</sup> The absence of purity issue references in the Samaritan account is starkly contrasted with the centrality of purity as an issue in the Cornelius account. Luke sees no need to reference purity or to use the circumcision label relative to any individual, group, or event in the former. Compare this to the prevalence of purity references associated with Cornelius and the events among his household.

Second, the absence of reference to glossolalia in association with the Holy Spirit experience in the Samaritan account is at least curious. Luke makes a point of describing the Cornelius household's Holy Spirit encounter as being evidenced by glossolalia. Although the Holy Spirit encounters among the Samaritans were accompanied by some discernible activity, Luke chooses not to identify that phenomenon.

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<sup>119</sup> This study departs from Neyrey's classification of Samaritans as Gentiles, thus grouping them with Cornelius and the Ephesians (1991, 287, 297). Chapter one of this study identifies Samaritans as a form of Judaism. This classification does not ignore the tensions between these social groups, but chooses to align Samaritans more accurately in their historical religious ethnicity.

These distinctions beg the question—why does Luke choose not to mention glossolalia in relation to the circumcised Samaritans encounter with holiness while making noticeable mention of glossolalia as a validating mark of the uncircumcised converts’ encounter with holiness? The difference between these two groups’ contact with God is that, in the Cornelius encounter, holiness was, for the first time, directly encountered by non-Covenant people (see Chapter 1, section 5.2.2). Since glossolalia was the boundary sign that marked the Cornelius Gentiles fit for God’s holy presence, it is logical to conclude that Luke omitted a glossolalia reference from the Samaritan mission account because the recipients were circumcised, already marked as fit for God’s holy presence.

It must also be noted that the Samaritan believers were initiated into the Jesus community through the baptism rite before receiving the Holy Spirit. With this narrative arrangement, Luke signals the complete absence of purity conflict relative to including Samaritans as in-group members. Their confession of belief in Philip’s proclaimed gospel results in their social inclusion.<sup>120</sup> Only after their water baptism initiation “into the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:16) do Peter and John pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Luke thus effectively separates the holiness encounter (receiving the Holy Spirit) from any purity qualification issues.

The differences in these two accounts confirm the role of glossolalia as a marker signalling the purity status of those manifesting the language miracle. The purity status of those in Cornelius’ household who perform glossolalia was equal to those bearing the mark of circumcision. This purity equivalence is confirmed by Peter’s rhetorical question, ““Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water?”” (Acts 10:47). Peter addresses this challenge to those Israelites present to raise the uncircumcised status of the Gentiles as the issue preventing baptism. They could not, confirming glossolalia as the premier evidence

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<sup>120</sup> “But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).

of purity status. Those speaking in tongues had encountered holiness as the result of God's initiative. Public initiation into the community followed as the unavoidable consequence.

Another event in Luke's narrative that included a Jesus follower receiving the Holy Spirit is Ananias' visit to Saul in Damascus.<sup>121</sup> It is assumed Saul experienced a Holy Spirit encounter like the Samaritans. This assumption is based on Ananias' statement of mission—that Saul would see and be filled with the Holy Spirit—and the record of Saul receiving his sight. Since the sight was restored, it must be assumed the Holy Spirit infilling occurred also. Baptism is recorded with no purity issues raised regarding Saul's status. The absence of any glossolalia reference signals again that Saul's purity status as a circumcised member of the covenant in-group renders a glossolalic marker irrelevant.

### **3 Luke's Social Role for Glossolalia**

The conclusion indicated by the above analysis of these narrative passages is that glossolalia was emerging as a purity boundary marker within the Jesus movement particularly at the movement's social intersections with non-Israelite converts. This emerging marker superseded circumcision for these Gentile converts. Luke demonstrates this by first omitting glossolalia references when circumcised individuals or groups are responding to the message about Jesus and then by emphasizing glossolalia for the first Gentile experience of God's presence.

The Jesus movement, being a reformed Judaism, was founded in the purity traditions and sensitivities of covenant Yahwism. Jesus challenged the existing purity institutions, frequently redrawing purity boundaries that radically disturbed the social status quo (Neyrey 1991, 292–293, 299–302). However, His reformation of the purity map of Yahwism stopped short of

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<sup>121</sup> “Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength” (Acts 9:17–19).

any revolutionary adjustment to the primary ethnic boundary, which marked off holy people. This is why Luke's legitimation of this major development in defining purity boundaries was necessarily extensive and elaborate. If the newly defined in-group was to be legitimate to Luke's audience, its legitimacy must be demonstrated over against the traditional Israelite purity map. Berger (1969, 31) states that the intensity of the challenge determines the sophistication and seriousness of the responding legitimation. Berger's statement is useful here in its context:

One may say, then, that the facticity of the social world or of any part of it suffices for self-legitimation as long as there is no challenge. When a challenge appears, in whatever form, the facticity can no longer be taken for granted. The validity of the social order must then be explicated, both for the sake of the challengers and of those meeting the challenge. The children must be convinced, but so must be their teachers. The wrongdoers must be convincingly condemned, but this condemnation must also serve to justify their judges. The seriousness of the challenge will determine the degree of elaborateness of the answering legitimations.

Luke composes a legitimation elaborately equal to the serious challenge posed by traditional Israelite purity *nomoi*. First, he founds the legitimation on divine initiative and divine approval (Peter's vision experience). On this foundation, Luke establishes the Gentile encounter with holiness, evidenced by glossolalia. Luke identifies the significance of the glossolalia for the readers by showing it as identical to the Pentecost phenomenon, an already confirmed sign of a holiness encounter. Luke then silences opposition by using glossolalia as the confirming proof of God's approval of Gentile inclusion.

According to Luke's legitimation formula, glossolalia is God's mark in Gentile flesh that exerts precedence over the absence of circumcision in confirming purity status. Just as circumcision qualified a Gentile Yahwism convert for initiation into the social world of the Israelites, so glossolalia qualified Gentile converts to the Jesus movement for similar initiation. The purpose of circumcision for Israelites was to mark those of sufficient purity status as to be compatible with God's holiness. The circumcised people of God could enter holy space

without danger of contaminating the space or incurring divine retribution. It is holiness that is bounded from contamination, and circumcision is a marker that enforced that boundary.

Peter's dilemma (along with all the circumcised Jesus followers) stemmed from God himself ushering the uncircumcised (those not bearing the mark of purity status) across the boundary into contact with holiness. The sacred was strictly bounded in the Israelite cosmos, something to be approached only by those bearing the mark of purity. Circumcision was the mark required of those who would penetrate the boundary and contact holiness. Gentiles were not marked for such boundary crossing, and Israelites bore the custodial responsibility to protect holiness from encroachment, and thus defilement, by unclean Gentiles. The Gentiles had already engaged holiness without the Israelite-administered ritual marking and were thus on the inside of the boundary. Peter's question expresses his dilemma: "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have" (Acts 10:47). Restated to reveal the social implications his question may be something like this: "These have already crossed our boundaries into contact with holiness. How can we refuse to ritually solemnize what is already their obvious and God-ascribed status as in-group members?" The implication is that Peter and his associates could indeed refuse to ritually initiate the Gentiles into the community, but to do so would be violating God's directive to Peter not to treat as unclean what God had cleansed. Glossolalia was the mark of cleansing, thus the mark defining a new purity boundary. The Jesus group leaders could either enforce the traditional boundary, marked by circumcision, or accept the new boundary, marked by glossolalia. Peter's acknowledgement and subsequent defence of the new boundary and recognition of its marker moves the legitimation of the boundary closer to becoming a social



institution in the Jesus movement's social world.<sup>122</sup> Haenchen is correct in noting that "what is happening is no negligible special case but a revolution of principle" (1965, 355).

#### **4 The Jerusalem Council: Further Legitimizing the New Purity Boundary**

We need to take note of Luke's narrative structure in Acts in light of his unfolding legitimization purpose and strategy. First, the social world of the Jesus group is legitimated at the highest level—a symbolic universe is constructed and validated. Under this overarching sacred canopy, Luke introduces the internal purity issue, legitimating a new purity boundary marked by glossolalia. Only then does his narrative move the Jesus movement into the Gentile world and the subsequent challenges and conflicts. Conflict drives the legitimization of this new boundary: Peter's internal conflict with his own conscience, illustrated by the vision experience; the conflict between Israelite purity boundaries and the Cornelius invitation; the conflict revealed in Peter's baptism challenge at the Cornelius event; and the conflict with the circumcision group in Jerusalem. As the conflicts expose a challenge to the legitimacy of the emerging new boundary that would include Gentiles, Luke produces a legitimating response.

The purity conflict plot demands that we consider Acts 10–15 as one thematic unit in the Acts narrative. The major boundary reform to the closed system of the Jesus group begins with Cornelius and ends at the Jerusalem conference, with the new boundary a legitimate institution of the movement. Rather than being an awkward interruption to this theme, Paul's first missionary campaign is a demonstration of the new boundary working "on the ground" with validating signs and wonders.

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<sup>122</sup> Although this study does not address the historical accuracy or facticity of the narrative events, Esler does, and from a distinctly parallel social perspective. Esler (1994) asks "whether the importance of glossolalia in the admission of Gentiles into the early Christian communities is merely a Lucan theme or whether it also accords with the historical reality of the Christian movement in its earliest period" (38). Following a discussion of the narrative's historical accuracy, Esler concludes that "the admission of Gentiles into the early communities was the result of their manifesting glossolalia and other gifts of the Holy Spirit" (51).

Luke's initial legitimation groundwork regarding a new purity boundary that identified tongues-speaking Gentiles as qualified to be in-group members was institutionalized at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:1–35). Berger and Luckmann (1967, 54) define institutionalization as “a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors.” The single event of Gentile glossolalia followed by social inclusion did not, in itself, result in institutionalized recognition of Gentile inclusion. As Berger and Luckmann point out, institutions must result from habitual actions (1967, 53). It was following the development of a Gentile Jesus group at Antioch and the Gentile response throughout Paul and Barnabas' first mission that a new Gentile-inclusive boundary could be institutionalized.

The challenge to the new Jesus community boundary comes from within through the in-group members' demand for Gentile submission to the traditional marker—circumcision (Acts 15:1, 5). This challenge proposed that Gentiles could not be considered eligible for salvation unless they conformed to Israelite nomic tradition.<sup>123</sup> In light of the background purity issues, this proposition can only imply that Gentile impurity would disqualify them from God's favour and interaction. The challenge further proposed that Gentiles not only be required to submit to circumcision, but also to “obey the law of Moses” (Acts 15:5). Luke has thus framed the purity conflict with this sharp contrast: God proscribes labelling Gentiles as unclean if he has cleansed them, an actual occurrence marked by glossolalia; Peter's original apology for this was persuasive, preceding an intentional mission to recruit Gentile group members; and developing change in the Jesus group social world is challenged on purity grounds by an active group of members.

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<sup>123</sup> Malina (2001, 206) defines salvation for biblical persons as “cosmic rescue from the present situation.” Compare to page 94. This definition fits Luke's social themes well, excluding from the immediate benefits of salvation those who were unclean. Such boundary enforcement is administered by Israelites committed to the covenant responsibilities of being custodians of holiness.

This conflict precipitates the formal response of a conference in Jerusalem among the movement's primary leaders and key representatives. It is in the context of this conference that Luke brings the reformed boundary into direct confrontation with its resistance. The result of this conference is an official decree of legitimacy for the new boundary based on reflection of the validating factors.

The first legitimating factor, presented by Peter, is a review of the Cornelius event, reminding the group that they were already familiar with this Gentile Holy Spirit encounter. Peter reminds them that it was God who demonstrated approval of the Gentile inclusion by "giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8–9). Luke concludes Peter's speech by confirming, in direct response to the earlier warning to the contrary, that Gentiles do indeed qualify for salvation (Acts 15:11). Fitzmyer (1997) suggests that Luke placed Peter strategically as the authoritative Jerusalem spokesperson in the clean-unclean food vision, Cornelius conversion, Jerusalem apology, and the Jerusalem council to lend legitimating weight to this radical social development (453–454).

The second legitimating factor is the evidence provided by signs and wonders among the Gentiles, recounted by Barnabas and Paul (Acts 15:12). That Luke inserts this evidence here as one of three primary factors legitimating the revised social boundary supports the above proposition that the first missionary campaign is strategically placed in the narrative as part of this thematic whole. Luke intended Paul and Barnabas' mission to the Gentiles to be a key legitimating component of the revised purity map. God's favour toward the *uncircumcised* Gentiles confirms the legitimating effect of the Cornelius event.

The third legitimating factor in Luke's narrative of the Jerusalem council is James' speech, which illustrates three legitimating devices (Acts 15:13–21):

- 1) James references Peter's speech, reiterating for emphasis that it was God who took from the Gentiles a people for himself. Luke positions James in the narrative relationship to the Gentile issue as he did Peter—publicly recognizing that God marked Gentiles as clean, by His own initiative and prior to any human intent or effort to convert Gentiles (Acts 15:14).
- 2) James then interprets Israel's Scriptures so as to apply them directly to the conclusion at hand. Locating new social worlds in a historical and cosmic frame of reference is key to eliminating a sense of novelty or precariousness, as Berger points out (1967, 33). The speech events in Acts are part of Luke's legitimation formula, because it is in the speeches that Luke has characters (re)interpret Israel's history to apply directly as validation of the Jesus group and its developing institutions.
- 3) James suggests that Gentile inclusion in the people of God is something that was intended and should have been known from the ancient past (γνωστὰ ἀπ' αἰῶνος). This latter phrase is probably James' own comment on his revised quote from the Septuagint (Metzger 1994, 379). This locates God's decision to cleanse and include Gentiles in the ancient past, a persuasive legitimation technique that erases all unease related to the novelty of the practice.

Douglas (1966) explains the importance of creation and the created order in maintaining holiness:

We can conclude that holiness is exemplified by completeness. Holiness requires that individuals shall conform to the class to which they belong. And holiness requires that different classes of things shall not be confused.

Another set of precepts refines on this last point. Holiness means keeping distinct the categories of creation. It therefore involves correct definition, discrimination and order. (67)

James' summary to his prophetic quotes strongly implies recognition of this anthropological principle. James recognizes that creation defined categories and classes of

clean-unclean beings and, if Gentiles are to be considered potentially clean, this classification must be founded in the created order. James is not only locating Gentile inclusion in Israel's covenant and prophetic history, he is also connecting this inclusion to creation. We must infer that Luke's readers are to conclude that God's created order mapped out Gentile inclusion from the beginning. The word αἰῶνος indicates time without reference to beginning or end (Holtz, EDNT). Sasse (TDNT) states, "The concepts of time and eternity merge in the formulae in which αἰών is linked with a preposition to indicate an indefinite past or future, e.g., ἀπ' αἰῶνος (Lk. 1:70; Ac. 3:21; 15:18) . . . ." Through James' speech, Luke is leaving his audience with the impression that this new boundary is not new at all, but rather represents God's created order. It could have no more effective legitimization. As noted by Neyrey, "Creation, the premier act of ordering and classifying the world, constitutes the original map of 'purity' or holiness for Israel. The holy God expresses holiness through this order" (1991, 277).<sup>124</sup>

The council concludes with an agreement to instruct Gentile converts to comply with four abstentions: "from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood" (Acts 15:20). The text clearly intends that these regulations govern the convert's life *following* baptism, not "entrance 'conditions' to be imposed upon them" (Marshall 1980, 253; see also Johnson 1992, 273). Witherington (1998) argues rather persuasively that these four proscriptions intend to prevent Gentile involvement with pagan temple worship (460–466).<sup>125</sup> If Witherington is correct, the intent would be for these proscriptions to prevent

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<sup>124</sup> Douglas (1999) presents an interesting parallel discussion of purity and atonement being rationalized in the context of Genesis and creation within a treatment of atonement in Leviticus. This discussion is parallel in the sense that Douglas argues that creation is the blueprint for all purity codes and classifications (231–234, especially 233).

<sup>125</sup> Johnson (1992, 266–267) identifies the same idolatry theme in all four proscriptions but fails to conclude that they primarily intended to prevent participation in pagan temple worship. Fitzmyer assumes the motive is to impose a minimal Levitical holiness code intended for the house of Israel and "the aliens that sojourn among them" (1997, 557). Haenchen (1965) assumes the list of proscriptive laws is simply the minimum that could be imposed without making the Law of Moses burdensome (459). Conzelmann, while acknowledging that these rules made it possible for Jews to live together with Gentiles, rejects a social significance for the proscriptions, arguing

Gentile converts from bringing the pagan temple purity pollution into the presence of holiness, the community of Jesus followers. Regardless of whether the proscriptions had pagan temple worship consciously in focus or not, the ultimate effect of the rules is to promote the greatest potential for unrestricted fellowship within the community—social cohesiveness unobstructed by purity conflict issues. The society re-formed by the now-legitimated new boundary is fully expected to manifest the coherence and solidarity necessary to its survival and perpetuation. Potential threats to its integrity have been obviated.

The council serves in Luke's legitimation formula as the capstone authority on the social configuration of the Jesus movement. The conclusions, and the letter issued to publish those conclusions, signal the consummation of Luke's intent that the purity boundaries, sponsored exclusively by purity sensitivities and taboos, were legitimately redrawn, and the ensuing social world of Jesus followers should rightfully conform to them.<sup>126</sup>

### **5 New Testament Parallels to the Social Role of Glossolalia**

Two indications in the New Testament beyond the Luke-Acts literature that glossolalia occupied social significance in the first-century Jesus movement are found in Mark and Philippians. The first is in the longer ending of Mark. Mark 16:17 states that “these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues [γλώσσαις λαλήσουσιν καινῶς].” Regardless of the textual-critical issues swirling around this passage related to its origin, it was added early, at least by the second century (Irenaeus and Tatian knew of the longer ending, in part or whole) (Metzger 1994, 103). At the very least, this

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instead that the significance of the list is “salvation-historical, since the decree provided continuity between Israel and the church . . .” (119). Munck (1967) argues for the social significance of the decree: “The decree was aimed precisely at this . . . to make it possible for Jews and Gentiles . . . to meet at the common table” (140).

<sup>126</sup> Neyrey's summary relating Israelite purity mapping to body mapping is informative: “By the abolition of these distinguishing body rules [circumcision and dietary laws] characteristic of first-century Jews, the new map of the body conformed to the new map of people, which was inclusive in character, not exclusive” (1991, 294).

text points toward an awareness that glossolalia was esteemed as a sign, a validating mark, of in-group members of the Jesus movement. Either the author included it with this intention or it was inserted later, again with the awareness of its social significance.

The other text suggesting a social role for glossolalia is Philippians 3:2–3: “Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.” Paul here defines a sharp contrast between those who depend on circumcision as the mark of inclusion and those who, instead, worship by God’s Spirit. Although glossolalia is not specified here, the agency of the Holy Spirit in Yahweh worship is clearly identified. The conceptual conflict is intact relative to the Acts legitimation formula of Gentile inclusion. Approaching God under the legitimated status of Spirit agency supersedes that status legitimated by circumcision.

Paul illustrates the contrast with his sentence structure, using emphatic construction to say, “It is we ourselves who are the circumcision . . .” (Philippians 3:3). It cannot be missed that this is a construction of contrast, defining the “circumcision” (in-group Yahwists) as those who worship by the agency of the Spirit of God. The Spirit’s agency is to be understood as superseding circumcision as the mark of true covenant people.

While this discussion of New Testament texts pointing to the same social dynamic related to the Spirit and glossolalia does not directly confirm Luke’s legitimation program, it does lend credence to the conclusion. These glossolalia/Spirit agency references at least reinforce the Jesus society’s awareness of glossolalia’s social significance and how it was advanced and referenced by church leaders and traditions.

## CHAPTER 4 THE EPHESIAN DISCIPLES PERICOPE IN LIGHT OF LUCAN LEGITIMATION

### 1 Summarizing a Legitimation Reading of Acts

The previous two chapters demonstrate the validity of reading Luke-Acts as the author's legitimation of the social world developing around the Jesus movement. Luke's Gospel lays the foundation for this reading by legitimating the Jerusalem temple as the *axis mundi* of Israel's cosmos. The Gospel then legitimates Jesus on this foundation as the true representative (broker) of Yahweh, who challenged the traditional purity map of Yahwism. The authenticity of Jesus' person and mission prepares for the legitimation of the movement that would emerge around him following his death and resurrection. The first seven chapters of Acts legitimate the social world of the Jesus movement as an authentic reality at the highest cosmological level, initiated and constructed by God, and superiorly grounded in Israel's covenant history. Acts' subsequent chapters demonstrate the legitimacy of social institutions, most significantly the purity reclassification of believing Gentiles, emerging in this newly validated society in the face of significant resistance and conflict with Israelite traditions.

That Luke's primary purpose was the legitimation of the Jesus group's social world as an authentic, even superior, Yahweh-worship movement must be considered in light of this demonstration. In the fundamental nature of an Ockham's Razor approach, legitimation explains Luke's narrative purpose most naturally (*vis-à-vis* his original audience) and with greatest simplicity.<sup>127</sup> As the social sciences have established, social worlds are compelled to

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<sup>127</sup> This does not mean at all that a legitimation reading of Acts will dissolve the intricate challenges of interpreting an ancient text. This refers instead to the methodological approach to reading and interpreting Acts.



legitimate themselves, both to survive conflict and perpetuate healthy existence to succeeding generations. Legitimation is natural and mandatory for a society and is the logical and confirmed response to forces that threaten its well-being. More complex readings of Luke-Acts, such as Romantic history (history read subjectively as “novel”) are, at best, anachronistic. Prior to the nineteenth century “there was no sense of history as we use the term today” (Malina and Pilch 2008, 4). To superimpose on Luke’s narrative a Romanticist’s historical purpose is to apply levels of assumption and complexity that do not fit the original cultural context.<sup>128</sup> Similarly, attempts to impose complex theological purposes on the narrative are anachronistic and unnecessarily complex (see chapter 1, section 4 of this study). Both modern historiography and theology impose layers of complexity on the text that were not natural to the original audience, thus violating William of Ockham’s maxim that “what can be done with few (assumptions) is done in vain with more” (McDonald 1995, 347). This is certainly not to say that Luke was not writing history and that historical and theological derivations cannot be made from Luke’s texts. In fact, these texts lend themselves well to these later scholarly disciplines, being rich with the kind of data that modern historians and theologians require. However, using the narrative data to construct historical and theological propositions is quite different from characterizing Acts as primarily historiography and theology and Luke as principally a *historian* and *theologian*.<sup>129</sup> This study argues that, although Luke may have been a historian according to methodological criteria of his time (see for example, Lucian’s second-century treatise, *The*

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Many complex challenges remain in interpreting discreet passages due to the cultural, historical, and temporal distance between text and interpreter.

<sup>128</sup> For an in-depth discussion of how the Bible is read as literature in light of ever-changing literary perspectives and philosophies, see Prickett 1996. Prickett analyses the effect of Romanticism on Bible reading approaches and argues that our contemporary culture governs our literary and hermeneutical methods, distancing us more and more from the original audience’s appropriation of the texts.

<sup>129</sup> Innumerable treatments of Luke’s possible historiographical purpose have been published, and this study does not intend to argue the issue here in detail. An excellent concise summary of the issues related to Luke-as-historian is found in Achtemeier, Green, and Thompson 2001, pages 247–249.

*Way to Write History*), his motivation for writing Luke-Acts is demonstrably beyond recording events in audience-pleasing literature. Lucian criticizes the classification of *eulogy* as history, as well as what he deems the inappropriate identification of “the agreeable” as a subcategory of history: “History has only one concern and aim, and that is the useful; which again has one single source, and that is truth” (Lucian, 114). While history can be pleasing to the reader, if it fails to fulfil its useful purpose, it fails to be history (Lucian, 114). The useful purpose of Luke’s historical narrative is the legitimization of the Jesus movement and that movement’s social constructs. It is this purpose of Luke’s narrative history that must govern the reader’s understanding of its organization, themes, and data.

This study’s argument is that Luke organized and structured the historical data he possessed in the way most likely to achieve his purpose in legitimating to Theophilus the Jesus movement and the social world that emerged among the Jesus followers. Characterizing Luke’s narrative as primarily legitimization literature directly influences how individual passages are interpreted. Luke’s legitimization purpose brings certain suppositions to bear in the hermeneutical task of understanding sections and passages in Acts. One such supposition is that conflicts behind the text drive the legitimization and should inform our understanding of why Luke included specific pericopes, structuring them as he did, and should guide our apprehension of their meaning. Reading Acts as one concerted legitimization effort provides a higher degree of integration of the meanings of discreet events and accounts into a cohesive whole.

## **2 Reading the Ephesian Disciples Pericope through Luke’s Legitimation Program**

The Ephesian disciple event narrated in Acts 18:24–19:7 should be understood precisely through the lens of Luke’s legitimization strategy and against the backdrop of conflicts that threatened the validity, integrity, and cohesion of the Jesus movement’s social world. In contrast to scholars’ attempts to explain Luke’s narration of this event in isolation from an overarching “useful

purpose” of the whole piece of literature, locating the pericope firmly in Luke’s legitimization tapestry yields fruitful understanding. Both the meaning and significance of the events and the social dynamics motivating its inclusion emerge under the light of the legitimization reading.

The pericope under analysis begins in Acts 18:24 and ends in 19:7. Conzelmann (1963, 158) rejects considering the Apollos event (18:24–28) as originally or narratively connected to the disciples encounter following in 19:1–7. He argues this connection is purely redactional (159). Against Conzelmann, we argue that the purity conflict theme driving the organization of Acts from the Cornelius event on requires we consider these two narrative events as one thematic pericope. The following analysis will argue that Luke uses the Judean Apollos character to frame a specific and continuing purity conflict issue related to preventing the acceptance of Gentiles into the full in-group membership of the Jesus society. Luke then resolves the conflict by developing a legitimating narrative, which includes rehabilitating Apollos through the counsel of Aquilla and Priscilla and reinforcing the divinely initiated legitimacy of Gentile inclusion by applying the glossolalia purity marker.

## 2.1 Indicators to the Conflict Background of Acts 18:24–19:7

A prominent indicator that Luke is continuing to execute his legitimization strategy in response to purity conflict issues is the repetition of glossolalia as the validation of the disciples encounter with holiness. Following the initial advent of God’s Spirit among the Jesus group at Pentecost, Luke explicitly names glossolalia only in the context of the purity conflict surrounding the social inclusion of the Gentile Cornelius household. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, aside from Pentecost, glossolalia is noticeably not mentioned in connection with the Holy Spirit encounters by circumcised believers, such as the Samaritans and Saul. Luke structures the Cornelius narrative to show that glossolalia supersedes circumcision as a mark of purity. Glossolalia stands as the conflict-resolving sign and as the boundary marker upon which the

Jerusalem council formalizes Gentile inclusion. The fact Luke inserts the explicit notice that glossolalia accompanied the Ephesian disciples' holiness encounter signals that this event should be understood as another episode within the ongoing purity conflict between the circumcision group and the new (and now formally institutionalized) social structure of the Jesus movement. It also points to Luke's motivation for inserting this narrative episode in his legitimization narrative.

Another indicator of a purity conflict catalyst behind Luke's narration of this event is the designation of Apollos as an Ἰουδαῖος (Judean). Luke's detailed attention to label individuals and groups within his narrative strongly suggests that Apollos is labelled a Judean intentionally to characterize his role in the account. The Judean label conditions readers to expect a Judean orientation of Apollos' worldview, including his purity map biases. The demonstrated emphasis on purity conflict as a key issue of Luke's legitimating program leads us to expect that a character labelled *Judean* will exhibit Israelite purity orientations and social boundary biases.

The importance of the Judean label is amplified by Luke's Greek construction of Apollos' introduction. The emphatic position in the sentence of the substantive adjective Ἰουδαῖος indicates priority (Blass and Debrunner 1961, 248).<sup>130</sup> Luke is leading Apollos' introduction into the narrative with the emphatic statement that he is of the circumcision.<sup>131</sup>

A third indicator that purity conflict is behind the text is the revelation within the account that a group of Jesus followers were not apprised of the availability of a Holy Spirit encounter, a direct experience with holiness. This conflict indicator will be more fully developed in the exegetical section below. It suffices here to point out that believers in Jesus were, by this omission, segregated from holiness. In the context of our legitimization reading, this should

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<sup>130</sup> Ἰουδαῖος δέ τις Ἀπολλῶς ὀνόματι, (Acts 18:24).

<sup>131</sup> Witherington III (1998, 564) also notes Luke's emphasis on Apollos' Judaism, but describes the emphasis as an "ethnic, not a religious term."

at least raise the possibility of a purity conflict. These specific indicators of a purity conflict background to this pericope are in addition to the previous documentation in this study of the predominance of conflict in the Luke-Acts literature and must be considered within that programmatic context.

## 2.2 Reviewing Exegetical Questions that Frame an Analysis of the Passage

The introduction to this study posed several questions of this pericope. These questions explained and helped frame our research and now help focus our exegetical task. Before launching the exegetical application of this study's research, these questions will be reviewed and recast in light of the evidence produced by the analysis of Luke's legitimation program and its sociological implications.

- How might reading this pericope in its probable social context (as nearly as it can be reconstructed) contribute to better understanding its meaning and significance within Luke's overarching purpose?

The social context of Luke's narrative world is characterized by conflict between traditional social boundaries defined and enforced by purity classifications. These conflicts are the catalyst behind Luke's literary construction, moving him to compose the legitimation instrument we know as Luke-Acts. We must look for the meaning and significance of this pericope within the broader literary narrative context of the legitimation programme. Therefore, this question is now better recast: How does this pericope advance Luke's legitimation of the newly institutionalized Gentiles-inclusive social boundary?

- What is the narrative and social significance of glossolalia in the account of these events?

Having traced in the previous chapter the social role of glossolalia in Acts, we established the interpretive paradigm for understanding the significance of glossolalia in this passage. The

question may now be recast: How does glossolalia, functioning as a boundary marker, help point toward the purity conflict underlying this pericope and help us read this passage more nearly in its intended social setting?

- Was Luke indirectly addressing the prevalent social (Israelite-Gentile) purity conflict in the Acts narrative world within the account of these Ephesus events?

This study has demonstrated the overarching legitimation purpose as Luke's response to the conflicts threatening the integrity and coherence of the Jesus movement's social world. Therefore, the response to this question is most likely "yes," but verifying the conflict background will be explored within the following exegetical analysis of the pericope.

We refined our questions by posing another set of text-specific queries. These questions will also be reviewed and recast in light of this study's data and conclusions.

- Why was Luke careful to identify Apollos as a Judean (Ἰουδαῖος) and what might this identification contribute to understanding the social purpose of this event?

In the previous section's preparation for the application of this study's arguments to this pericope, this narrative feature (Apollos' Judean label) was identified as a Lucan indicator of purity conflict. Explicating the legitimation and, therefore, social purpose of this event is the objective of this chapter's exegesis.

- Why did Paul's initial question to the twelve Ephesian disciples concern receiving the Holy Spirit? Does this illuminate Paul's existing concern about an underlying conflict issue, one that might possibly be identified by a fresh reading of the literature?

These will emerge as some of the more probing questions and ones that will focus the pericope's analysis below.

- Why did Paul's immediate follow-up question concern the initiation rite of baptism, a dominant social boundary marker? Is it telling that Paul is immediately concerned with the mode of baptism when hearing that the converts were without the Holy Spirit?
- Was John's baptism elemental to the underlying social conflict Luke was addressing? For example, was it an alternative initiation related to the purity conflict prevalent in Acts?

These final two questions will also help focus our exegetical task and even suggest conclusions to this work. These questions now frame the exegetical task focusing on the Ephesian disciples pericope and point us to a fresh understanding of this narrative episode.

### **3 Analyzing the Ephesian Disciples Pericope**

#### **3.1 Apollos, Israelite Purity Bias, and Deviant Baptism Teaching**

Luke opens this literary unit (Acts 18:24–19:7) with a description of Apollos, including his background, abilities, and effect in proclaiming the message about Jesus. As noted above, Luke's emphasis is on the fact that Apollos is a Judean, an Israelite in-group member, meaning he was of the circumcision-covenant social world. Although Luke goes on to list Apollos' qualifications as a learned orator and passionate proclaimer of God's ways, it is Apollos' orientation as an Israelite that is foremost in Luke's characterization. This emphasis on Apollos as an Israelite is meant to colour all his other attributes and qualities, including his accurate instruction about Jesus. In other words, Apollos is a passionate and precise teacher about Jesus *from a historical Israelite bias*. This Israelite bias most certainly included the purity sensitivities integral to covenant Yahwists along with the accompanying social boundary consciousness.

Supporting this conclusion about Luke's emphasis of Apollos' bias is Luke's portrayal of Apollos freely and openly outspoken in the synagogues (Acts 18:26).<sup>132</sup> This further indicates Apollos' orientation as a representative of traditional Israelite social bias. By itself, this point is not highly significant because the synagogue provided a religious audience for any highly motivated Israelite religious teacher. It was logical that a teacher passionate about his message would seek out the ready-made venue of the synagogue. However, combined with Luke's overarching program of legitimating new social boundaries, his emphasis on Apollos' orientation as an Israelite, and the ensuing corrective action taken by Aquilla and Priscilla, we must conclude that locating Apollos' teaching in the synagogue is at least a minor support for identifying Apollos' orientation and motivation. The sense of Apollos' Judean bias could be further supported if Dunn is correct about Priscilla and Aquilla hosting a Jesus gathering in their home (1996, 251).<sup>133</sup> The fact that Apollos had to be invited to this gathering would indicate his previously exclusive delivery of his Jesus teaching via the synagogue.<sup>134</sup>

Apollos is further described as "being fervent in [the] Spirit."<sup>135</sup> Witherington III's (1998, 565) and Bruce's (1990, 402) arguments are convincing that this description refers to the Holy Spirit and must also describe Apollos' charismatic experience and Holy Spirit energizing (see also Dunn 1996, 250; Marshall 1980, 303). In contrast, some prominent scholars interpret ζέων τῷ πνεύματι as referring to Apollos' own human fervency (e.g., Munck 1967, 183, Fitzmyer 1998, 638–639). Others, such as Conzelmann (1987, 158), Haenchen (1971,

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<sup>132</sup> οὗτός τε ἤρξατο παρρησιάζεσθαι ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ (Acts 18:26)

<sup>133</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 16:19, although it is not clear if this household gathering existed prior to Paul's ministry, which begins in Acts 19:8.

<sup>134</sup> This conclusion is supported by Apollos' orientation later in Corinth (Acts 18:28) to convincing Judeans publicly of the validity of Jesus as Messiah (see Johnson 1992, 335–336).

<sup>135</sup> ζέων τῷ πνεύματι (Acts 18:25).



550), and Johnson (1992, 332), note both interpretations but avoid preferring one to the other. Scholars who prefer reading this as a description of Apollos' own human fervency, or who avoid preferring an interpretation, generally do so based on the information following in the same verse that he was "knowing only John's baptism." These scholars argue that this deficient knowledge constitutes less than a fully converted follower of Jesus (theologically), and thus one who would be unlikely to possess the Holy Spirit. This study argues for the preferred reading to be that Apollos was "fervent in [the Holy] Spirit." This reading describes a learned and eloquent charismatic Jesus follower whose teaching was intentionally deficient for social reasons, which are argued below.

A statement regarding Apollos that is important to this analysis and the understanding of the entire pericope is that describing his embrace of "John's baptism" in Acts 18:25: "ἐπιστάμενος μόνον τὸ βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου . . . ." Luke's construction here is interesting in that he does not provide any qualifying information about Apollos' relationship to John's baptism—the statement is made without comment or insinuation. The lack of comment about Apollos' teaching content signals that Luke's audience shared with the author the significance of this statement about Apollos. The issues were so well-known, including the social implications, that Luke found it unnecessary to flesh out the qualifying details.

It is absurd to consider a person of Apollos' background in Alexandria, with his superior learning and eloquence, to have such limited knowledge about baptism so as to only know about the Baptist's rite. A person of Apollos' educational stature would be well familiar with Israelite practices of washings, including those required of proselytes, as well as with those common among non-Israelite religions. Therefore, it is impossible that this statement about "knowing only John's baptism" could define the extent of Apollos' actual knowledge. This phrase cannot

be interpreted literally but must be understood as descriptive of something other than Apollos' own personal experience or knowledge. The Greek participle in 18:25, ἐπιστάμενος, usually translated "knowing" (ESV), or "being acquainted with" (NASB),<sup>136</sup> is better understood as a qualifier of Apollos' instructional content to his hearers rather than a definer of the limits of his own personal knowledge or experience. The participial adjectival clause marked by ἐπιστάμενος follows Luke's confirmation of the excellence of Apollos' teaching about Jesus: Ἀπολλὸς ἐλάλει [was talking] καὶ ἐδίδασκεν [teaching] ἀκριβῶς [accurately, carefully, well] τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. We should understand this clause to modify the *talking* and *teaching* about Jesus rather than Apollos' own personal training or experience. This understanding argues for an idiomatic use of the language somewhat similar to Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 2:2 that he "resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."<sup>137</sup> This sense, then, of Luke's statement about Apollos and John's baptism would read, "revealing in his teaching about Jesus only the baptism of John."<sup>138</sup>

This interpretation that the exclusivity of John's baptism referenced Apollos' teaching rather than the extent of his knowledge about baptisms is further supported by Luke's phrasing of the corrective action taken by Priscilla and Aquilla in verse 26. Priscilla and Aquilla take Apollos aside and instruct him "more accurately expounding carefully to him the way of God."<sup>139</sup> Given Apollos' traditional covenant-purity bias, and in light of Luke's purity conflict theme, we conclude that Apollos was made to understand that the *way* of God was reformed

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<sup>136</sup> BDAG defines ἐπιστάμενος as "to acquire information about something, *know, be acquainted with*."

<sup>137</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἰδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον (1 Corinthians 2:2).

<sup>138</sup> Haenchen (1971, 557) agrees with this interpretation but credits it to Luke's attempt to avoid attributing a non-Christian baptism to Apollos, thereby requiring that this man of stature be re-baptized.

<sup>139</sup> My translation of ἀκριβέστερον ἀντὶ ἐξέθεντο τὴν ὁδὸν [τοῦ θεοῦ] (Acts 18:26b). See Metzger 1994, 414 for a discussion of the reliability of τοῦ θεοῦ in the text.

and purity boundaries redrawn. The way of God must now embrace Gentile inclusion and, thus, John's baptism was not an acceptable limitation. Regardless of the textual variant used, τὴν ὁδόν is a term encompassing the whole of God's plan for humanity, through Israelite covenant and law history and through the life and work of Jesus. Within the horizon of our legitimation reading of Acts, "the way" or "the way of God" is more authentically defined under the sacred canopy (symbolic universe) Luke constructed and legitimated in Acts 1–7.<sup>140</sup> Implied here is that Priscilla and Aquilla assisted Apollos in a full understanding of this new Jesus group reality and its legitimacy as a superior cosmos of Yahweh worship. After composing such a persuasive and complete legitimation of the Jesus movement, from the most abstract cosmology to the concretized social institutions, Luke would not allow for any discussion of the Way not to embrace the entire conceptual machinery.

The argument here is that Luke is addressing a deviant<sup>141</sup> teaching circulating among at least a limited segment of the Jesus movement. Apollos, from an unidentified motive, was eloquently spreading the news of Jesus in synagogues and doing so from a superior knowledge of Israelite Scripture and a covenant-purity bias. This deviant teaching included baptismal instruction limited to the baptism of repentance administered by John. As analysis of Paul's encounter with the Ephesian disciples will demonstrate, this baptism deprived new Jesus followers from their personal encounter with holiness—the reception of the Holy Spirit.

Why is Luke being so obtuse about this deviant teaching and Apollos' role in its propagation? Why does he not describe it in detail and attack it openly as a threat to the Movement? For two reasons: 1) his legitimation of Gentile inclusion is complete and he can

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<sup>140</sup> "The Way," when used in Acts 9:2, 19:9, 19:23, 22:4, and 24:14 to refer to the Jesus followers' restructured Judaism *in toto*, should be interpreted as reflecting Luke's entire legitimation strategy as developed in the conceptual machinery recorded in Acts 1–7.

<sup>141</sup> Malina and Neyrey (in Neyrey 1991) define *deviant* as behaviour that "violates the sense of order or the set of classification that people perceive to structure their world" (100).

assume his audience is familiar with the conflict behind the events, thus making detailed explanation unnecessary, and 2) he is avoiding damage to Apollos' standing and influence as an effective representative of the Jesus movement. In this latter regard, Luke is carefully rehabilitating Apollos and his deviant teaching, correcting the effects of the teaching, and using the episode to advance his legitimization of the Gentile-inclusive purity boundary. Luke clearly intends for Apollos to emerge with his credentials intact as a key spokesperson for the Way. The discretion with which Luke treats this affair reveals this intent: Apollos was likely known to have propagated the deviant doctrine but was an indispensable proponent of the Way. This required his reputation to be rehabilitated but in a way that did not sabotage his honour status and influence.

Luke has already presented an extensive legitimization of Gentile inclusion formed around the Cornelius event and the formalizing of this social institution at the Jerusalem council. It was not necessary, nor was it his intention, to retrace that legitimization with the Apollos episode. Instead, Luke is addressing a conflict that lingered after the Jerusalem council and may have even been precipitated by that council's conclusion. Rather than rehearsing the legitimization programme of Gentile inclusion, Luke is here applying that legitimization to a related discrepancy in the life of the Jesus society. Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain this legitimization application as a nomic function of the symbolic universe (98). Luke is applying both the subjective values and objective meanings of his symbolic universe to discrepant events within the Jesus society. This is an example of Berger and Luckmann's statement that "once the symbolic universe is posited, discrepant sectors of everyday life can be integrated by direct reference to the symbolic universe" (1966, 99). Berger and Luckmann further explain that by applying the mythological *Weltanschauung* (symbolic universe), a discrepancy "may be understood as a violation of the divinely constituted order of the universe" (99). The symbolic

universe is applied to the disciples' situation by first documenting their privation of the Holy Spirit, then revealing its cause, and finally restoring the situation to the divine order—Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit, being marked as in-group by the evidence of glossolalia.

### 3.2 The Disciples' Holiness Encounter

Paul, the divine man, is brought to the scene to reverse the effect of the deviant doctrine. Luke's narrative carefully avoids direct contact between Apollos and Paul, removing Apollos to Achaia before Paul's arrival (see Conzelmann 1987, 158). We cannot determine if this is intentional, allowing Paul's correction of the deviant baptism teaching to be completed without further diminishing Apollos. However, it is at least plausible that Luke intentionally avoids such a confrontation, given the subtlety with which he introduces and corrects Apollos' role in the account of the deviant teaching at Ephesus. Also supporting this inference is Luke's explicit reminder in 19:1 that Paul's arrival and subsequent encounter with the twelve disciples occurred "while Apollos was at Corinth." Not only does this insinuate Luke's intention to avoid confrontation, it also indicates that what follows is to be understood as continuing the episode begun in 18:24. There is no obvious and immediate reason for Luke to specify Apollos' absence other than to clear the way to bring Paul into the narrative to further correct the deviant teaching and its effects on the community. As argued below, Luke uses this to reverse the discrepancy and repair the Gentile-inclusive social boundary with its glossolalia marker.

Note the abruptness with which Luke engages Paul with the twelve believers at Ephesus: Paul arrives, finds these disciples, and immediately inquires about their receiving the Holy Spirit: εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐλάβετε πιστεύσαντες; (Acts 19:2a).<sup>142</sup> The narration's swift connection between the absence of Apollos and the query of the disciples about the Holy

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<sup>142</sup> Haenchen notes the abruptness of the question, suggesting that Luke intended Paul's question to clarify its own purpose to his audience (1971, 553).

Spirit further suggests the connection between Apollos' influence and Paul's initial question. This connection is solidified by the twelve disciples' eventual announcement that they were baptized with John's baptism, the very deviant teaching Apollos introduced and for which he was corrected. That Luke narrates Paul's encounter with these disciples before seeking out the synagogue (a normal Pauline narrative pattern) further supports the argument that Luke intends this event (1) to be read as one with the entire Apollos event, and (2) as a corrective account prior to the formal beginning of Paul's Ephesus ministry (see Haenchen 1971, 552–552).

We must infer that Paul is addressing a known discrepancy from the fact that Paul's initial question is whether these men had received the Holy Spirit. The encounter between Paul and the twelve disciples is narratively structured for the purpose of addressing this problem, namely the absence of Holy Spirit reception by converts. Luke shows Paul asking this question because some converts were being prevented from receiving the Spirit. This pinpoints the crux of the conflict. In light of the legitimation reading generally and Luke's extensive purity boundary legitimation device specifically, preventing an encounter with the Holy Spirit was a social exercise motivated by purity concerns. Luke's method of addressing the problem in his narrative is to bring Paul on the scene in Apollos' wake and immediately inquire about the Holy Spirit. By these observations and conclusions, we identify Luke's purpose for including this pericope: to address a deviant teaching, at least to some degree propagated by Apollos, which was preventing converts from receiving the Holy Spirit.<sup>143</sup>

The many instances of scholarly argumentation regarding whether these disciples were actually believers in Jesus or only disciples of John are rather inane, given the evidence in the

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<sup>143</sup> The aorist participle, πιστεύσαντες, should probably be translated "after you believed," making the action of the participle prior to that of the main verb, ἐλάβετε. However, because the controlling verb is also in the aorist tense, it is possible that the participle action is contemporaneous to the main verb (Wallace 2002, 214, esp. note 2). See also Horton 2001, 316–318. Since this controversy is not germane to this study, it will not be further argued here. The issue germane to this study is whether an encounter with the Holy Spirit was associated at all with these men's' transition from unbelief to faith.

text. Because Paul's question at the least establishes the possibility that these men's belief *could* result in a Holy Spirit encounter, it eliminates entirely an exclusive discipleship to the Baptist. In addition, it is clear that their initial expression of belief resulted in baptism. Belief was not enjoined by the Baptist as a precursor to baptism—repentance from sin was. In other words, John did not baptize those who exercised belief but those who expressed repentance. Those he baptized he admonished to believe later in the one who would come after, but this eventual belief was not associated with his baptism rite. Paul's question about baptism "when [they] believed" disassociates the baptism from being administered by John. Therefore, it is not possible that these were disciples of the Baptist who happened to migrate to Asia following John's death. Furthermore, the question of whether these men could be "Christians" without the experience of the Holy Spirit is irrelevant to Luke.<sup>144</sup> The question of being a Christian and its relationship to the Spirit is a later theological construct and based on a broader Canonical context than just Acts. Luke's intent here is to use the legitimated institutions to repair a discrepancy in the social world of Jesus followers, not to provide theological fodder for disputes that were not germane to his audience. We must conclude that these disciples were Jesus followers, baptized into Jesus group fellowship (see Malina and Pilch 2008, 135; Fitzmyer 1998, 643; Munck 1967, 187).

The believing disciples respond in the negative—no, they had not received the Holy Spirit when they believed. The likelihood that the absence of a Holy Spirit encounter could have been an inadvertent coincidence is eliminated by the disciples' qualifying revelation that they had not even been informed that the Holy Spirit was available.<sup>145</sup> Johnson suggests this

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<sup>144</sup> Virtually all commentators use the term "Christian" to refer to Jesus followers. It is used here simply as reference to commentators generally.

<sup>145</sup> Concerning the translation of the disciples' response to Paul, Wallace (2002, 312) suggests an interesting option not discussed in the literature and worth reviewing here: "'we have not heard whether a spirit can be holy.' . . . is at least possible for the following reasons: (1) There is no article to define the relation of adj.

is best understood to mean “that they did not know there was a Holy Spirit *in connection with baptism* [emphasis added]” (1992, 337). Johnson’s reading complements the conclusion that these disciples had been catechized with deviant information about baptism.

Paul’s question, in fact the entire narrative scene, is designed to provoke this response (cf. Munck 1967, 187). The fact that converts were not being instructed about, and thus prevented from experiencing, the Holy Spirit emerges as the causative background problem in Luke’s narrative social world, which explains this episode’s inclusion in the narrative. Luke is addressing this conflict as part of his legitimation of the social institutions which were solidifying in the Jesus movement’s social world. It will be argued below that this conflict-legitimation scenario is extensional to the Gentile inclusion/purity conflict tracing back to the Cornelius and Jerusalem council events. It suffices here to point out that this narrative scene is staged to illuminate the conflict so that it can be resolved in a way that applies the social boundaries previously validated within the Cornelius and Jerusalem council episodes. By correcting this discrepancy, Luke fortifies the legitimation of Gentile inclusion as a purity map reform and glossolalia as its marker: “For Jesus groups, receiving the Spirit signalled genuine in-group belonging” (Malina and Pilch 2008, 136).

Having received the response he seemed to anticipate, Paul’s next question concerns the baptism rite with which the disciples were initiated into the Jesus community. This logical thread must be followed carefully because it reveals Luke’s purpose. Having received confirmation that these believers were precluded from receiving the Holy Spirit, Paul’s follow-up question is, “Into what, then, were you baptized?” (Acts 19:3b: εἰς τί οὖν ἐβαπτίσθητε). The pronoun τί indicates the impersonal “what,” whereas τίνα would have indicated a person.

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to noun, thus it might be predicate (indeed, in equative clauses the anarthrous second predicate adj. outnumbers the fourth attributive adj. three to one). (2) The flurry of activity of evil spirits in Jesus’ day and the early apostolic period makes it feasible. (3) The fact that these disciples were from Ephesus, a known hotbed for cults, renders this a possible translation.”



Paul is not inquiring as to “who” they were baptized into, but into “what.”<sup>146</sup> The inferential conjunction, οὖν, denotes a conclusion subsequent to and caused by the disciples’ preceding response that they had not received the Holy Spirit in connection with their conversion (for a discussion of inferential conjunctions, see Wallace 2002, 673; Blass and Debrunner 1961, 234–235). Clearly, Paul is focused on the cause of their Holy Spirit privation, which he identifies as the kind or meaning of the baptismal rite they experienced. Conzelmann argues that “the dialogue presupposes that baptism and the Spirit belong together” (1987, 159). It must be concluded from Paul’s immediate follow-up question and the inferential conjunction that a defective baptism experience prohibited these men from receiving the Holy Spirit.

As stated by these disciples, their mode of baptism was John’s, which completes the connection to Apollos’ deviant doctrine. It must not be assumed that these were disciples of the Baptist, as many commentators have done. Not only is this conclusion unnecessary, it has no support in the text and affords no meaning or significance within the broader context of Luke’s narrative. Rather, Paul is asking them about the meaning or significance of their initiation into the Jesus community as disciples of the Way. By responding that they received the baptism of John they “indicate that the meaning of their baptism was the same as that which John the Baptist had proclaimed” (Newman and Nida 1972, 361).<sup>147</sup> Conzelmann characterizes the disciples’ response as “peculiar” and states that Luke’s intent in this phrasing is to avoid identifying the baptism as “in John’s *name*” (1987, 159).<sup>148</sup> These converts were not afforded an encounter with the Holy Spirit because the purport of their baptism precluded it. Therefore,

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<sup>146</sup> Haenchen (1971, 553) notes this peculiarity, but wrongly suggests it is merely Luke’s construction to disallow John’s name being elevated to a status equal with Jesus, i.e., as one worthy to have a baptized group of personal adherents.

<sup>147</sup> See also Marshall (1980, 306), who suggests that Luke “has compressed an answer of the form, ‘We were baptized in the way commanded by John.’”

<sup>148</sup> εἰς τὸ Ἰωάννου βάπτισμα (Acts 19:3b)

the effect of Apollos' deviant teaching and administration of baptism was to deprive Jesus believers of the holiness encounter experience via reception of the Holy Spirit. Apollos' doctrine, and apparently whatever bias motivated the doctrine, was rectified by Priscilla and Aquilla, but the effect lingered among the Jesus community in and around Ephesus.<sup>149</sup> By addressing the issue, Luke's confirms that some related confusion or conflict lingered among a broader constituency and that he saw fit both to dispel the confusion and use the event to further execute his legitimization formula.

Paul rectifies the deficiency generated by the deviant teaching and reverses its effect. He does this by explaining that being initiated into John's repentance teaching fails even John's core message, which was to believe into the one who would follow—Jesus. Paul's short speech about John's kerygma convinces the disciples that their initiation into the Jesus group was deficient, and they submit to baptism into the name of the Jesus.

It must be noted that these disciples already believed the good news they had heard about Jesus. This seems to make Paul's exhortative response about John's kerygma incongruous to the dialogue, if indeed he intended then to introduce them to Jesus. This is not the case, however, since Paul was conversing with men who already followed Jesus. It is more accurate to understand this interchange as one that introduces them to John's teaching rather than to the person of Jesus. In other words, it was John's message with which they were unfamiliar and about which they required instruction. These followers of Jesus, having believed Apollos' spirited preaching about Jesus, submitted to baptism as explained by Apollos. This teaching apparently included openly associating baptismal instruction with repentance as enjoined by John the Baptist. This makes better sense of the data we have in the text and integrates it as part of a coherent whole with the Apollos event.

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<sup>149</sup> Cf. Blaiklock 1959, 155.

At some point in the sequence of activity, Paul lays hands on the disciples and they receive the Holy Spirit, an encounter evidenced by glossolalia. Because the description of laying on of hands follows the announcement of the disciples' baptism, many scholars assume this occurs subsequent to baptism. This interpretation is not required by the text, however. The Greek allows for the laying on of hands, the Holy Spirit advent, and the glossolalia to have occurred before, contemporaneously to, or after the baptism ritual.<sup>150</sup>

Luke's specification here of glossolalia connects this event with the Cornelius conversion event, the only other mention of glossolalia following Pentecost. The centrality and prominence of the Cornelius event in Luke's legitimation program establishes glossolalia as the divinely applied mark in the flesh of a ritually clean status. The significance of glossolalia must be identified through the interpretive lens of the precedent of the Cornelius episode. Luke articulates glossolalia here to indicate the disciples were Gentiles and the glossolalia now marks their purity status as compatible with holiness.<sup>151</sup> Luke does not otherwise specify their ethnicity, which may also point to them being non-Israelites. The absence of an ethnic designation is stark relative to Luke's amplification of Apollos' Judean classification. Given the absence of such ethnic identity in a context where Luke was careful to identify Judeans, the

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<sup>150</sup> καὶ ἐπιθέντος αὐτοῖς τοῦ Παύλου [τὰς] χεῖρας ἦλθε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπ' αὐτούς (Acts 19:6a).

<sup>151</sup> The fact that at least some of the apostles had been baptized by John prior to following Jesus may be significant toward further confirming a background purity conflict and that these disciples are Gentiles. Neither the gospels nor Acts record any hint of a re-baptism for those apostles transferring allegiance from the Baptist to Jesus (see Bruce 1977, 386). The fact re-baptism is emphasized and illustrated here, including recording of glossolalic phenomenon, may indirectly bolster our conclusion that these Ephesian disciples were indeed Gentiles. The apostles were of the circumcision, thus of the appropriate purity status to contact holiness. Just as Luke saw fit to not associate glossolalia with circumcised converts to the gospel but emphasized the physical manifestation in Gentile experience, he also saw no need to discuss the re-baptism of the apostles.

specification of glossolalia, and the purity conflict theme evident behind this episode, it is clear that these twelve disciples are Gentile converts to the Jesus movement.<sup>152</sup>

### 3.3 Analysis Summary

It will be helpful to summarize this analysis before synthesizing the conclusions of this study.

- Luke emphasizes that Apollos is a Judean, the emphasis signalling social and religious bias, and reveals that the charismatic Apollos teaches only the baptism that John spoke about to those who respond to his excellently delivered and accurate teaching about Jesus.
- This deviant baptism doctrine is corrected by Priscilla and Aquilla, who tutor Apollos more completely in the way of God. The *way* terminology recalls Luke's construction and legitimation of the Jesus group's symbolic universe, including the legitimation of Gentile inclusion, the newly institutionalized social structure of the Way.
- Luke brings Paul to the scene to address the social effects of Apollos' deviant doctrine by confronting converts who had submitted to John's baptism. Because this baptism failed to point to the Pentecost meaning and significance of baptism, it precluded them from experiencing an encounter with holiness—the Holy Spirit coming upon them. The result is that Gentile converts are left outside the social boundaries of the Jesus community.

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<sup>152</sup> At the very least, Luke intentionally avoids classifying these converts, either assuming his audience shared knowledge that they were Gentiles, or intending a more subtle message, perhaps related to the erasure of ethnic distinctions within the Jesus movement. Neyrey (1991, 297) lists these Ephesian disciples as Gentiles who receive the Spirit. Fitzmyer (1997, 643) also identifies these disciples as Gentiles.

- This discrepancy in the Jesus movement's social world, relative to its legitimated symbolic universe, is corrected, first by tutoring Apollos, and then by facilitating both the appropriate baptism rite and the Gentiles' encounter with the Holy Spirit.

#### 4 Conclusion

Finding satisfactory evidence of the purity conflict behind the Ephesian disciples pericope supports our hypothesis that Luke was correcting deviant teaching about baptism that produced the marginalization of Gentile converts, excluding them from contact with holiness. This was primarily a social dynamic, excluding Gentiles from full fellowship in the Jesus community. Although arguing from silence is weak at best, it is interesting to note that the Ephesus converts are not associated with a synagogue or any other social group. Paul simply “finds” them: καὶ εὗρεῖν τινὰς μαθητάς (Acts 19:1b). We mention it here only to allow that this may signal their social marginalization, a device with which Luke's audience may have resonated.

The marginalization of Gentiles and the contagion of their unclean status were firmly entrenched as institutions of temple-centric Yahwism (see Chapter 2, sections 4, 5.2.1, and 5.2.2) and integral to the ethnic consciousness of its devout defenders. The Court of Gentiles was a physical model of Israel's way of hedging impurity from contact with holiness at the *axis mundi* of the cosmos. This religio-ethnic consciousness of devout Judeans is replicated in the use of John's baptism as a means of preventing perceived contagion from contacting the holiness resident in the Jesus groups. If uncircumcised Gentiles are not marked by glossolalia, the mark that supersedes circumcision, they are treated as yet unclean and kept at the social margins of the Jesus community.

The Jerusalem council narrative implicitly confirms that the Jesus society had thoroughly and officially accepted the symbolic universe constructed by Luke in Acts 1–7. The insistence at that council by the Pharisaical Jesus followers that Gentile converts be circumcised affirms their

awareness that the Jesus society constituted the residence of holiness on earth. The Pharisaical contingent argued for the mark of circumcision as the required indicator of purity status to qualify Gentiles to fully participate in the holiness now resident within the community. This is quite similar to proselytes being required to submit to baptism and circumcision in order to advance beyond the Court of Gentiles (see Stuehrenberg 1996, 504; deSilva 2000, 257). It may be concluded, therefore, that the social effect of Apollos instruction about John's baptism was parallel to that of the Court of Gentiles in the Jerusalem temple—marginalizing non-Israelites (the uncircumcised) from direct contact with holiness.

Given the following, it is possible to surmise that some marginalizing intent sponsored the formation and propagation of this doctrine:

- Apollos knew the experience of the Holy Spirit but was convinced (prior to correction) to teach John's baptism to preclude Gentiles from the same experience.
- Luke's literary organization (placing this event after the Jerusalem council and after glossolalia is established as the purity boundary marker for Gentiles).

It is unlikely that Luke intends for us to assume that Apollos was party to originating the doctrine, given his amenability to correction. It is more likely that he was recruited to the teaching based on appeal to his fervent Israelite group identity.<sup>153</sup> If this was indeed a contrived attempt by the Pharisaical group, who were defeated at the Jerusalem council, to marginalize Gentiles, Luke's corrective inclusion of these events is certainly reasonable. Luke's subtlety and discretion are also understood as his intent to protect the Jerusalem council's authority, its legitimating effect, and the community role of Apollos.

Because this discrepancy militated against the legitimated symbolic universe of the Jesus movement and its social institutions, Luke is compelled to address and correct it. The cohesion

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<sup>153</sup> Marshall notes: "In view of the heretical character of much early Christianity in Alexandria, it would not be surprising if Apollos had picked up defective ideas of the faith" (1980, 303).

and integrity of the social world required that this deviance be challenged and eliminated. By the time of Luke's composition of this legitimation narrative, Apollos would have already established his value to the Jesus movement cause and be firmly entrenched with group honour status. Because Apollos was of such value (certainly not an adversary to the movement), the rehabilitation of his doctrine is accomplished carefully and subtly, retaining his standing as an effective group emissary. The correction was successful to Luke's readers even without explicit conflict language.

#### 4.1 Reflections and Recommendations

The goal of this study was threefold: (1) demonstrate the validity of reading Acts as legitimation narrative; (2) within the light of that reading, analyse the social role of glossolalia within the narrative world of Acts; and (3) to apply the conclusions of that analysis to the Ephesian disciples pericope. When read as legitimation literature, the symbolic universe of the Jesus movement assumes sharp focus, first revealing the lines of contrast with temple-centric Yahwism, and then revealing the points of conflict regarding emerging social institutions. This legitimation reading produces a clear picture of the social role of glossolalia in legitimating the reformation of the social boundaries originally created by Israelite purity sensitivity and covenant responsibility. Understanding the social role of glossolalia and Luke's concern with resolving discrepancies provides the information needed to understand the Ephesian pericope as part of the cohesive literary whole.

The legitimation reading of Acts demonstrated by this study builds only a basic foundation and that for the analysis of one pericope. There is much work left to be done in developing and applying this methodology to the entire Acts narrative. We did not explore fully the subject of group formation and group boundary creation (see Pilch 1999, 165). Neither did we examine purity map revisions other than those circumscribing persons. Work could

certainly be done in the areas of purity map revisions related to time, space, and food, for which ample evidence is available in Acts (see Neyrey 1991, 292–304, 361–387). In addition, Paul’s missionary campaigns, final Jerusalem confrontation and arrest, and journey to Rome all play a significant role in Luke’s legitimation formula, but were outside the purview of this research.

This approach to reading Acts may also produce insights related to historical-critical issues, such as dating the authorship and identifying the author’s community. Given Luke’s legitimation purpose, his event omissions are certainly curious, if not telling. For example, if Acts was written post-temple destruction as is generally assumed, why does this event not factor into Luke’s conceptual machinery? How might Luke’s development of cosmology, using both Israelite history and more universal cosmological concepts to legitimate the symbolic universe of the Jesus community, suggest to us the possible composition of his audience? What parallels may be identified between Luke’s conceptual machinery for legitimation and that of other New Testament authors? And finally, how does Luke’s legitimation of the Jesus movement compare to other legitimation literature extant from the same period?

This study’s first chapter used a quote from Reimer’s discussion of methodology to orient the expectations of the research. We suggested this statement is useful as both an objective and a measuring stick. He states that success in analyzing the socio-cultural world of Acts is gauged by “asking Geertz’s [1973, 24] question of whether it has aided us ‘in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can, in some extended sense of the term, converse with them’” (Reimer 2002, 16).

We may now decide if, indeed, we have gained access, in some significant way, to the conceptual world of Luke’s narrative and whether we are better able to converse with the subjects of this world.



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